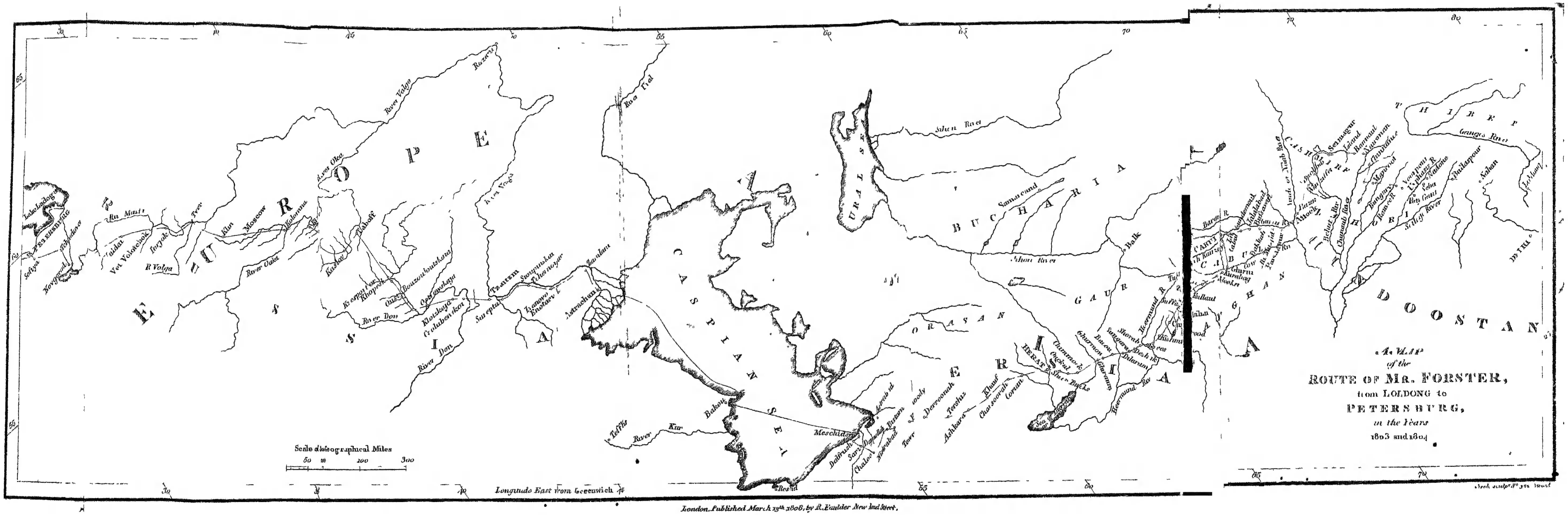

A MAP
of the
ROUTE OF MR. FORSTER,
from BENGAL to
PETERSBURG,
in the Years
1783 and 1784

Neele sculpt 352 Strand

London. Published March 13th 1808, by R. Faulder New Bond Street.

JOURNEY

FROM

BENGAL TO ENGLAND,

THROUGH THE

NORTHERN PART OF INDIA,

KASHMIRE, AFGHANISTAN, AND PERSIA,

AND INTO

RUSSIA BY THE CASPIAN-SEA.

BY GEORGE FORSTER,

IN THE CIVIL SERVICE OF

THE HONOURABLE THE EAST-INDIA COMPANY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON.

PRINTED FOR R. FAULDER AND SON,
NEW BOND-STREET.

1808.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

EARL CORNWALLIS,

KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER, ONE OF HIS BRITANNICK MAJESTY'S HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL OF HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES, GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF ALL THE POSSESSIONS AND FORCES OF HIS BRITANNICK MAJESTY, AND OF THE HONOURABLE THE UNITED COMPANY OF MERCHANTS OF ENGLAND, IN THE EAST INDIES, &c. &c. &c.

My Lord;

DEDICATORY praise hath ever been suspected of sincerity; and passes, indeed, among men of the world, as a strain of turgid language, designed to court favour, soothe the vanity of a patron, or—in its best sense, to express the hasty dictates of gratitude.—Yet, I have the confidence to hope, that the tenour of this Dedication will deserve a less severe censure, and that it will be even said, I have narrowed the limits of my subject.

WHEN I had resolved to intrude my book of Travels on the notice of the public, I naturally looked around, being an unknown author, for some name to give it a sanction; not the sanction of wealth or grandeur; for they are not always the criterion of worth; but that which was to be obtained from the man, who stood eminent for the qualities which most essentially contribute to the honour and welfare of his country.

THE object of this search, which does not cross the eye at every glance, was seen with pleasure; and though the uses derived from it may be deemed presumptuous, I could not resist the desire of fixing so bright an ornament to my work; and of offering, however slender, my tribute of applause to actions, which demand a distinguished page in the annals of our nation.

ILL Fortune, which, from the day of ancient ROME, has been ordinarily followed by neglect, obscurity, and oftentimes disgrace, opened a more extensive field for the display of YOUR LORDSHIP's endowments; and like the blasts of Winter on the rooted oak, hold out honourable testimony of superior strength.

IN the Eastern world, YOUR LORDSHIP has been opposed to an enemy far more formidable, — the possession of a power never before exercised by a British subject; not even committed to the first magistrate of our state; and which extends over a spacious region, a numerous and wealthy people. Yet, far removed from controul, in a land whose every principle of government is actuated by a rapacious avarice, whose people never approach the gate of authority without an offering, we have seen, and with wonder, the inflexible maintenance of an integrity, only to be equalled by a temperate use of command.

BUT, panegyrick being the least grateful where it is the most due, I will close this address, with a zealous wish, that YOUR

LORDSHIP may yet continue to govern the British dominion in India, and complete the work that already hath assumed so fair an aspect. The sacrifice is great, but the reward is still greater; it will reach beyond the sovereign's bounty, or the people's praise.

I have the honour to be,
With the most profound respect,
MY LORD,
YOUR LORDSHIP'S
Most devoted,
And most obedient
humble Servant,
GEORGE FORSTER.

CALCUTTA,
August the 1st, 1790.

PREFACE.

BOOKS of Voyages and Travels having been ever held in estimation, and indulgently received, I am the less fearful of submitting the following volume to the notice of the public. A knowledge of the manners of different nations qualifies domestic prejudice, and enlightens the mind; but the subjects of Britain derive from it a singular benefit; they see, through a comparison that communicates a fond pleasure to the heart, the unrivalled excellency of their laws, constitution, and government; they see these rare gifts brightly reflected on their national character, which still avowedly maintains its pre-eminence amongst the nations of the European world. Were a man to form a judgment of the bias of his own genius and disposition (on the merits of which he is, perhaps the least qualified to decide), I would unreservedly say, that in the course of my journey, I felt no impulse of partiality for any sect or body of men. It is of serious concern to *letters*, that many a man of genius and science has fixed a discredit on his works, by a wilful adherence to some favourite system, which alluring to its standard a various train of affections, and ideas, he becomes involuntarily incited to sacrifice to it the principles of truth and reason.

TRAVELLERS stand accused, even on proverbial authority, of adopting a figurative and loose style of description; and as I have been thrown into tracks, removed from the eye of European observation, I am prompted to earnestly solicit the confidence of the public in behalf of this work, and to say, that however vitiated by the errors of judgment, it has no tendency to discolour or misrepresent truth. The cursory dissertation on the former and present state of Bengal, may have some claim to favour, from the consideration that I visited that province in the description of a passenger; though but a small portion of local knowledge might have been acquired, essential advantages arose from this temporary residence.

GUIDED by no views of interest, nor impressed by any frown of power, I was enabled to examine the objects that came before me through a dispassionate medium.

THE letter on the mythology of the Hindoos, some copies of which were published in 1785, has been corrected since my return to India; but from the various intricacy of the subject, I am apprehensive it may yet contain errors and apparent inconsistencies. Investigations of the religious ceremonies and customs of the Hindoos, written in the Carnatic, and in the Punjab, would in many examples widely differ; yet the Hindoo religion, in all parts of India, stands on a common basis; nor does the vast superstructure, when the view is inspected with attention, essentially differ in its compartments. The ostensible dissimilarity arises, perhaps, from the manners of the same people; varying in Northern and Southern regions. A native of the lower Carnatic is mild, temperate, and generally timid; he performs the ordinances of his religion with a zealous and scrupulous attention; and the Bramin of that country, with many of the other sects, is confined strictly to the use of vegetable diet. How strong the contrast appears in the inhabitant of the Punjab; those even of domestic and laborious professions, are brave, daring, and often cruel. Bramins are the usual soldiers of the country, many of whom eat flesh meat; and they never leave their home, even when not employed in military service, without weapons of offence. The merchants and mechanicks, when they go but a few miles abroad, are all strongly armed; and in some of the Northern provinces, particularly in Bundilcund, the husbandmen carry a spear into the field they are cultivating. This difference of disposition has produced opposite manners in the same tribes of people, as well as opposite customs, which, if not attentively investigated, would afford a specious belief, that the inhabitants of the North and South of India were not connected by any national relation.

I HAVE to express with pleasure, great obligations to Colonel *Polier*, of the Honourable Company's service, for having furnished me with large historical tracts of the Sicques, and of the life of Shujah-ud-Dowlah. On every application to that gentleman for other information of Indian history, his papers and opinions have been liberally supplied. I am also much indebted to Mr. *Bristow*, of Bengal, for a valuable manuscript memoir of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, from which I have extracted curious and useful matter. The prefixed chart of the road, calculated according to the reckoning of my journal, was constructed by Mr. *Wilford*, of the Bengal corps of engineers, a gentleman of extensive geographical knowledge.

SCIENCE can receive but a slender aid from the materials of the following work. The manner in which I travelled, precluded the use of any instrument to ascertain the distance and bearings. The one I noted from observing the course of the sun;* the other is agreeable to the common computation of the country, which is not often found widely erroneous. My limited knowledge of botany prevents, also, any accurate description of various classes of trees and plants, which I saw in Kashmire and Persia. But the natural productions of those countries have been so scientifically treated by Chardin, Le Bruyn, and Bernier, that my inability will be the less sensibly felt.

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FORSTER'S TRAVELS.

LETTER I.

Benares, 31*st August*, 1782.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING resolved on visiting Benares, that I might, there, indulge, for a short time, an investigation into the mythology of the Hindoos, I procured permission to proceed to that city; and, as you may receive some amusement from the relation of my journey, with the observations that occurred, I will lay it before you; intreating, that you will make the necessary allowance for a stranger*, who, though his remarks, and the conclusions drawn, may partake of errors, will not, premeditatedly, discolour the truth.

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* The author is a civil servant on the Madras establishment.

VOL. I. B

On the 23d of May, I left Calcutta; and on the next day arrived at Sooksagur, a valuable and rising plantation, the property of Messrs. Crofts and Lennox. These gentlemen have established at this place, a fabrication of white cloth, of which the Company provide an annual investment, of about two lacks of rupees. They have, also, founded a raw-silk manufactory, which, as it bears the appearance of increase and improvement, will, I hope, reward the industrious and estimable labours of its proprietors. In this plantation, a large quantity of spirituous liquor is made, resembling, in an inferior degree, the American rum, which, since the commencement of the Dutch war, has become in great demand. Being applied to all the uses of the Batavia arrack, a considerable benefit is expected to arise to the Bengal province, from a current sale of this commodity. In justice to those who enrich their country by an introduction of valuable manufactures, the Government is called upon to yield them every protection, and grant them every fair indulgence; it is, likewise, the duty of the man of observation, to circulate the success of such works, that an emulation may warm the breasts of his fellow citizens, and that those who project them, may receive the tribute of applause, due to genius and industry. It must not be omitted, that this new establishment hath been noticed by the particular attention of the Government of Bengal, which, on many other occasions, has evinced a zealous disposition, in encouraging and promoting useful undertakings.

THE English should no longer account themselves sojourners in this country; they are now, virtually, its lords paramount, and their policy should not be that of a day; but, considering the opulence and wealth of the subject as closely tending to enrich the common state, they should, at large, support his wants, and encourage his labours. A conduct equally wise and profitable, would conduce to the increase of public, and private, prosperity, and operate as a compensatory retribution for some actions, which cannot bear the test of investigation; and which have, already, involved the national character in disgrace. In touching on this subject, I am necessarily led into reflections on the commerce of Bengal, interior and foreign, and on the common want of specie, throughout the province.

PREVIOUSLY to the æra in which the English became possessed of Bengal, the different nations who visited it, were obliged to give specie for the greatest portion of the commodities they purchased; there being but a small proportion of articles taken in barter by the natives. This species of commerce, so lucrative to India, and which must have deposited a large amount of gold and silver, continued for upwards of a century and an half. But, after the English Government was established in Bengal, the necessity of this commercial system no longer existed; the amount of the revenues became sufficient to purchase the cargoes of the country, and to defray the public expenditures: here, one channel of the influx of specie into Bengal was stopped, and it will be found, also, that the revolutions, which in that quarter, advanced the fortunes of the English, have materially lessened the like imports of the other European nations, who traded to Bengal. For, exclusively of finding a current sale for their commodities, they have been enabled to procure, from the English, large sums of money, for bills on Europe. An important change has also been effected on the interior commerce of Bengal, by the extinction of the Mahometan dominions.

The native princes, and chiefs of a various description, the retainers of numerous dependants, afforded a constant employment to a vast number of ingenious manufacturers, who supplied their masters with gold and silver stuffs, curiously flowered, plain muslins, a diversity of beautiful silks, and other articles of Asiatic luxury; the use of which, wealth, and a propensity to a voluptuous life, naturally excited. These Mahometan, or Hindoo, chiefs, have either been removed, or, being no longer possessed of their former resource, have fallen into poverty and decay; and the artisans, who had been supported in their professions by these powerful and wealthy masters, were, on their expulsion, obliged, from a want of subsistence, to quit their professions, or the country. Hence, many branches of rare manufacture, evidently declined; and some of the most precious are now no longer known. The distracted and impoverished condition of the Moghul and Persian empires, hath contributed, considerably, to lessen the great demand which was made by those states, for the produce of Bengal, when Delhi and Ispahan enjoyed reigns of grandeur and vigour. When it is considered, that the Moghul court, whether in its splendour or wealth, exceeded that of all other nations; that the numerous governors, interspersed throughout the provinces, adopted the manners of sovereign princes, and that all their more luxurious articles of dress were fabricated in Bengal; we must conclude, that the discontinuation of such a traffic has produced strong effects. In describing this commercial event, which has brought an evident change in the quality of the trade of Bengal, I am not authorized, by any specific knowledge, to say, that a general injury has been felt by the country; perhaps, the losses which have been sustained are counterpoised by the augmentation of the cargoes, though of a different species, which are now transported, annually, to Europe.

Having already noticed the large influx of European specie, or bullion, in this country, and the cause of the cessation of this traffic, I will offer some desultory sentiments, on the subject of the diminution of the coin in Bengal, of which, grievous complaints have long existed. During the Mahometan administration, private wealth was usually expended on the spot where it had been acquired; and though severity and oppression might have been exercised in the accumulation, yet, by its quick circulation, through the many channels of luxury, the country at large was improved and embellished, without any decrease of the general currency. It may be urged, that the expenditure of Europeans, in their public and private buildings, has, adequately, supplied the wants of the artisan and labourer. But, I am led to hazard an opinion, that this amount falls much short of that applied by the preceding princes to the construction of mosques, baths, Hindoo temples, grand reservoirs of water, spacious gardens, together with a variety of costly private edifices. These modes of expence are neither adapted to the genius, or inclination of Europeans, who have no religious passion to gratify, nor are they impelled, by patriot zeal, to raise monuments of grandeur in India; but holding themselves the moveable tenants of the day, they are eager to reach their native home, that they may there enjoy the fruits of their labour.

As the remittance of English property to Europe could not be sufficiently attained, by means of public bills, the servants of the Company, and private merchants, have been often driven to the necessity of exporting specie, though such a medium be attended with heavy loss; or they are induced to throw their cash into foreign funds, whereby their enemies, or at least, their rivals, are enriched. The injurious tendency of this limitation of public remittance, having been so severely felt, and repeatedly represented to the superior Government in England, it is to be expected that the channel of conveying property from India, will be opened in so efficient a manner, that the necessity of pursuing, in future, the destructive alternative of exporting gold and silver, or employing foreign agents, will be, wholly, obviated. As the private cash taken up in

India will be invested in Indian produce, and sent to Europe, for the express purpose of discharging the bills drawn; the position is clear, excepting in the event of unforeseen calamity, that the sales of the cargoes, in Europe, will enable the East-India Company to discharge the requisite payments. In testimony of the vast inherent resource of Bengal, it is necessary to observe, that the wealth of this province, which has supported, by its millions, the Coromandel and Malabar coasts, foreign and domestic wars, and the trade of China and Bencoolen, must have been accumulated in the space of sixty or seventy years.

FROM the period of Aurungzebe's death *, until nearly the date of our territorial establishments in India, when the Moghul Empire still preserved a large possession of its power, the balance of the revenues of Bengal was punctually conveyed, in specie and † bills, to the Imperial treasury. The remittance of this amount has been known to cause so great a scarcity of money, that many persons, possessed of even large property, have incurred difficulties, in defraying their domestic expences. Though the maritime commerce of Bengal does

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* This Prince died, A. D. 1707.

† A crore of rupees, or million sterling, has been sent in the course of one year from Bengal to Delhi.

not maintain the vigour which accompanied it, whilst the Europeans were confined to the coasts of India, and exercised simply the profession of merchants, a brisk and important trade is yet carried on at Calcutta. The advantageous traffic that subsisted formerly between this port and Pegue, Siam, and the Malay islands, now feebly remains; and, unless some favourable change is speedily effected, bears the appearance of a total failure. Though these branches of commerce, silver bullion, gold-dust, and precious stones, were introduced into Bengal; from whence, in return, raw and wrought silks, coarse cotton cloths, opium, and salt-petre, were exported. It hath also been alleged, that, within these late years, the maritime trade of Bengal has received a check from an embargo, or, what is tantamount, an excessive high duty laid on the importation of foreign salt. This restriction has reduced the number of ships, and lessened the considerable exportation of grain, which, before that period, annually took place at the port of Calcutta: yet, though it may have injured the exterior commerce, the revenue of the Ganges salt has been increased, by this restriction, to an amount never produced at any former period. It is painful, perhaps not just, to expatiate on the defects, or the misfortunes of a country, and hold them out to public view; without proposing remedies for the ills that are exhibited. The scantiness of my local knowledge, will only permit me to say, that as the welfare of the British dominion in India, ultimately depends on the prosperity of Bengal, no labour should be thought irksome, no rational plan left untried, which may improve its revenue, or encourage its trade.

On the 29th of May I arrived at Berhampore. In this cantonment, which is large and commodious, are stationed three regiments of Sepoys, and a battalion of Europeans. On the 15th of June, made an excursion to Mooreshedabad, and its environs, that I might view the theatre on which those interesting schemes had been agitated, which, after a series of intrigue and bloodshed, advanced the English to the dominion of a wealthy kingdom.

At the distance of a mile below the city, and on the opposite bank of the river, stands the burying place of Ali Verdy Khan, known also in India by the name of Mahobut Jung; a man, who, by his abilities as a soldier and a statesman, raised himself from a private condition, to the Subahdarry of Bengal. He maintained an obstinate war with the Mahrattas, for the space of eight years, and was, after an obstinate struggle, obliged to cede to them the districts of Kuttack.

Not far from the tomb of Mahobut Jung, lies interred his nephew, Seraje-ud-Dowlah, well known in English history, by his capture of Fort William, and afterwards, confining the unfortunate garrison in a close dungeon; where most of them died from the severity of their situation. The fate of this young man was similar to that of many an Eastern Prince; of such, especially, who experience a reverse of fortune.—Seraje-ud-Dowlah was betrayed by Meer Jaffier, at the battle of Plassey, and assassinated a short time after, by his order. Were the conduct of Meer Jaffier to be tried by the law of natural affections, or by the rules of private honour, it must appear tainted with a die of deep hue. Mahobut Jung, thinking to secure to his successor the attachment of Meer Jaffier, bestowed on this officer, the highest office of Government, with his sister in marriage; and on his death-bed, in the most earnest manner, delivered the young Nabob to his tutelage and protection. Mahobut Jung should have known, from successful experience,* that no ties are sufficiently coercive to restrain the wild force of ambition; particularly that species of it found in an

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* He had made a successful use, in his attainment of power, of the various instruments of intrigue and treachery.

Asiatic breast, which is seen to break down every fence.

THE Mollahs, who are employed here to offer up their prayers for the dead, said, that the widow of Seraje-ud-Dowlah, frequently comes to this mausoleum, and performs certain ceremonies of mourning, in memory of her deceased husband. Mooreshedabad, which now bears the various marks of poverty and decay, an evident result of the removal of the seat of Government, is a city of no old date; as the residence of the subahs of Bengal, who, not many years ago, kept their court at Rajah Mhal, about one hundred miles further up the river. The present Subahdar, Mubarick-ud-Dowlah, grandson of Meer Jaffier, and son of the Nabob Mirun, who was said to have been killed by lightning, receives an annual stipend of sixteen lacks of rupees, from the Company's treasury: having never been vested with the power, or possessed of an aspiring temper, he is the less restless, in his present situation. As the British nation, in the acquisition of their possessions in Bengal, have been materially aided, by the family of Mubarick-ud-Dowlah, they should not, from any narrow scheme of economy, recede from their engagements with this prince, who, though flattered by the most indulgent attention, must still have mortifying moments, unless he is wholly bereft of the sense of feeling, or the faculty of reflection. No buildings of note are seen in the city of Mooreshedabad: that which most attracts the attention, is the cemetery of Meer Jaffier, his begum, and the Nabob Mherun*: few things are more efficacious, in repressing or mocking vanity, of which affection so ample a share has fallen to our lot, than, dispassionately, to view the repository of those who in their lives have been termed great men, who, "before they shuffled off this mortal "coil," inflamed by pride, avarice, ambition, thought empires too narrow for their scope, and that mankind were only created to become the instruments of their mad desires: these once towering creatures, are now, per force, lodged in very moderate apartments, where their turbulent schemes sleep in quiet, and their names are often buried in their ashes. — A tomb is one of those few appendages of a great man, in the possession of which none envy him.

On the 23d of June, I embarked in a boat at Mooreshedabad, and with a fresh easterly wind, sailed up the river about 30 miles. The boatmen, generally Hindoos, fasten the boat to the shore in the evening; that they may eat and refresh themselves; it not being the usage of their sect to prepare victuals on the water.

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* I have been also informed that Mherun was interred at Rajemhal. It is not usual among the Mahometans to erect cenotaphs.

24th.—I saw the village of Jungypore on the eastern shore, where the Company have established a factory, for the manufacture of raw silk. This day our course was about twenty miles.

25th.—Entered the main branch of the Ganges: — here the river affords a spacious view, which is terminated, at the extremity of a long reach, by a vista of the hills above Rajah Mhal, extending, in a regular chain, to the north-west. The Ganges, which at Sooty,* is full four miles across, was that day roughly agitated by a strong wind, which heaving the waters into a short breaking wave, gave it the appearance of an arm of the sea. The riches of Bengal, with a large portion of the conveniency of its inhabitants, are, in an essential degree, derived from this river, which, with its numerous branches flowing through and intersecting an extensive space of country, transports speedily, and at at a moderate expence, the various product of districts, towns, and villages, to places, where they are immediately consumed, or collected for the supply of more distant marts. The Ganges also affords a grand aid to the English, in all military operations within their own territory; whilst their armies on the Coromandel and Malabar Coasts, are, from a want of provisions and ammunition, cramped and impeded in their motions; and are frequently, for the obtainment of these supplies, compelled to retreat, on the moment of reaping the full fruits of victory. But, the Bengal armaments are furnished, from their store boats, with every equipment; and the Europeans enjoy, in their camps, even the luxuries of life.

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* A village near the head of the Cassumbazar river.

In the evening, arrived at Rajah Mhal, a former residence of some of the Bengal subahdars. Ali Verdy Khan, in the beginning of his administration, which commenced in 1742, removed the seat of Government from this place to Mooreshedabad. I could not learn the cause of this preference; although not deficient in enquiry. The natives of India, are not much addicted to curious investigation, and are generally inattentive to the history of their own country. It would seem that their chief happiness is centered, in enjoying the present hour, which absorbs every retrospect of the past, and care of the future. Their pleasures are even indolent and languid, and partake of the mild influence of their climate, and the easy produce of a fertile soil. Ali Verdy Khan probably removed his capital to Moorshedabad, that he might keep a more vigilant watch over the actions of the English, whom, it was said, he feared; and also more conveniently prosecute the war against the Mahrattas, who had invaded his country, on the side of the Kuttack. Rajah Mhal bears at this day an impoverished aspect; and were it not for the heaps of ruins interspersed through the town and its environs, which have now mouldered into a state of deep decay, it would be difficult to discover, that this place had been, so lately, the principal city of a powerful and opulent chief. Sauntering amongst the ruined buildings, I strayed into a small garden adjoining the bank of the river; where perceiving an old man, employed in digging, I entered into a conversation with him. Happening to be more intelligent than the common class, and agreeably to the period of his life, very narrative, he afforded me much amusement in his relation and remarks. This old Cicerone observed, that the very spot which he was then cultivating, was the site of the Nobet Ghah, or the music-hall of the old palace; and that within his recollection, a capacious garden had extended in front of his little enclosure, which the Ganges had now swept away. The instability of the monuments of human grandeur cannot, in any region of the globe, I apprehend, be more faithfully, or more grievously exemplified than at Rajah Mhal; yet

I must exclude from this range of ruins the convenient and hospitable house of Mr. Cleveland, which formed a part of the Subahdar's palace.

On the 26th, passed, with a fresh easterly wind, the village of Sickergully, (where a heavy swell had nearly overset the boat) and observed near it a neat building, which had been erected by Mr. Cleveland, for the accommodation of passengers.

27th.—Saw the town of Pointee, near which, on an eminence, stands an Hindoo, or Mahometan mansion; and a mosque, now apparently in disuse. Adjacent to these buildings, a monument has been raised to the memory of a Mr. Middleton, who died there, on his journey to Calcutta: these objects would not perhaps deserve notice, did they not present picturesque land-marks.

28th.—The wind being light, and the current strong, the men were obliged to track the boat. These two last days we proceeded only about thirty miles. An evident danger is incurred by approaching the banks of the Ganges during the latter season of the rain, from their frequently falling, being of great height in many places, and chiefly composed of loose soil, the weight of earth descending on a boat, would undoubtedly destroy it.

29th.—At noon, arrived at Jungherah, a

small rocky island, on which stands a seminary of Hindoo mendicants, and on one of the sides are seen some figures of very ancient sculpture. A long line of hills, running from the south-east to the north-west, forms here a beautiful termination of a broad range of the river. It has been said, that Seraje-ud-Dowlah was assassinated at Jungherah, whither he had fled for shelter from the pursuit of Meer Jaffier; but it should seem more probable, that he was apprehended near this place, and carried to Mooreshedabed.

THIS day, observed the frame of a well, built of bricks, that stood in the middle of the stream, with its wall in perfect condition, full fifteen feet above the surface of the water. It must have pertained to some village, bordering on the Ganges, now destroyed by the encroachment of its flood.

PROCEEDED this day, about 35 miles, and in the evening, saw Mongheer, where I arrived the next day. The fort is in a decayed condition, as well as the private buildings, which are uninhabited. The situation, which occupies a flat of great extent towards the westward, and has the Ganges on the north, is equally well chosen for defence, and conveniency. One of the angle bastions commands a beautifully winding view of the river, which is closed by a range of distant hills. It appears that the present fort of Monghcer was built by Sultan Shujah, the second son of Shah Jehan,* who governed the provinces of Bahar and Bengal, and was held in high estimation by the natives, for his liberality and equitable administration. As some relation of Sultan Shujah, (especially of the latter period of his life, which was involved in a series of calamity) may excite your attention, and enable me to offer up a tribute of pity to the memory of an unfortunate, but gallant, prince, I will lay it before you, agreeably to the memoirs of M. Bernier, one of the most accurate and ingenious writers, on the history of Hindostan.

After the battle of Alhabad, in which he had been worsted, Sultan Shujah retired into the interior parts of Bengal, with his army, where he made a vigorous stand against the arms of the Emperor †. Bernier says, "There re-
" mained, now, no other thorn in the side of
" Aurungzebe, than Sultan Shujah, who still
" maintained himself in Bengal; but he was at
" length forced to yield to the power and for-
" tune of his brother.

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* This Prince caused a broad and deep trench to be cut from the river to the hills, (very perceptible traces of which are now to be seen) for the more effectually defending this post against the attack of Aurungzebe's army, which had pursued him from the upper parts of the country.

† Aurungzebe.

" AMIR KUMLA,[*] by the numerous bodies of
" troops that had joined him, was enabled to
" hem in the army of Sultan Shujah, on both
" sides of the Ganges, and to compel that prince
" to seek refuge at Dacca, a town situate on
" the extremity of Bengal, towards the sea side;
" and here, ensues the conclusion of the tragedy.
" The Sultan Shujah, being destitute of
" ships to put to sea, and not knowing whither
" to fly, sent his eldest son, Sultan Banque, to
" the King of Racan,[†] or Mug, who was of
" Heathen religion, to know, whether he might
" be permitted to take shelter in his country,
" for a certain time, and when the monsoon, or
" periodical winds should set in, whether he
" could be furnished with a vessel, to carry
" him to Mecca, from whence he intended
" passing into some part of Turkey, or Persia.
" Sultan Banque returned to Dacca, with some
" galleasses, manned, with Feringhis, I mean,
" those fugitive Portuguese Christians, who had
" entered into the service of the King of Racan,
" and were employed in no other business than
" ravaging the lower parts of Bengal. The
" young man reporting to his father, that he had
" been kindly received, and had full assurances
" of protection, and assistance given him;

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[*] The Officer commanding the expedition against Sultan Shujah.

[†] More commonly known by the name of Aracan.

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"Sultan Shujah, with his family, consisting of "three sons, daughters, and their mother, embarked at Dacca. On their arrival at Racan, "they were treated with much civility, and provided with such necessaries, requisite for "their subsistence, as the country afforded, "in the name of the King. Some months pass "away, the season of the favourable winds also "approaches, but no mention is made of the vessel, though the Sultan required it, on no other "terms than the payment of the hire, for he, "yet, wanted not rupees of gold and silver, or "gems —*He had, indeed, too great a plenty of* "them, his wealth being, in all appearance, the "cause of his ruin, or at least, contributing "much to it. This prince might long enough "have solicited for a ship; all was in vain; he "effected nothing.—On the contrary, the King "began to shew great coldness, and to complain of his not coming to see him. I know "not whether Sultan Shujah thought it unworthy of himself, and too great a condescension to visit this King; or rather, whether "he feared, that being in the power of their "chief, his person might be seized on, for the "purpose of plundering his treasure, and that "he himself might be delivered into the hands "of Amir Kumla, who had offered, in the "name of Aurungzebe, large sums of money,

" with other considerable advantages, for obtaining the possession of this unfortunate " family.

" WHATEVER might have been the cause, " Sultan Shujah did not go thither, but sent his " eldest son; who, on approaching the dwelling of the King, began to display his liberality to the people, by throwing amongst " them a considerable quantity of rupees of " gold and silver, and when he came before " the King, he presented him with rich embroideries, and rare pieces of goldsmith's " work, set with precious stones of great value; " excusing at the same time, on account of " some illness, his father, in whose name he had " now to entreat, that the ship, which had been " promised, might be held in readiness. But, " all that the Prince had done, had not advanced his business; on the contrary, this King, " in the course of five or six days after, made a " demand of one of the daughters of Sultan " Shujah, in marriage, in which the father resolving never to acquiesce, the King became " highly offended.

" Sultan Shujah seeing the season for sailing " had passed away, and perceiving the situation " in which he was then placed was a desperate " one, determined on pursuing equally desperate measures, and undertook the performance

“ of an action, which may afford a great example
“ of the efforts of despair. Although
“ this King of Racan, in his religion, is a Pagan,
“ there are many Mahometans, mixed with the
“ people, who have either chosen to retire
“ amongst them, or have been enslaved by the
“ Portuguese before mentioned, in their expeditions
“ to the neighbouring coasts. Sultan
“ Shujah secretly gained these men, whom he
“ joined with two or three hundred of his
“ own people, the remainder of those who followed
“ him from Bengal; and with this force
“ he resolved to surprize the house of the King,
“ put his family to the sword, and make himself
“ sovereign of the country. This bold
“ attempt, which resembled more the enterprise
“ of a desperado, than that of a prudent man,
“ yet, had, from the intelligence I collected
“ from many Mussulmen, Portuguese, and
“ Hollanders, who were then on the spot, a
“ certain feasibility in it. But the day before
“ the blow was to be given, a discovery was
“ made of the design, which altogether ruined
“ the affairs of Sultan Shujah, and involved in
“ it the destruction of his family. For, after
“ this failure, having no further hope of retrieving
“ his fortune, he endeavoured to escape
“ into Pegu; a purpose, in a manner impossible
“ to be effected, by reason of the vast

" mountains and forests that lay in the way: " besides, they pursued him so closely, that he " was overtaken, the same day on which he " fled. It may be well imagined, that Sultan " Shujah defended himself, with the most ob- " stinate courage. The number of Barbarians " that fell under his sword will scarcely be cre- " dited; but at length, overpowered by the " multitude of his enemies, he was forced to " quit the combat. Sultan Banque, who had " not advanced as far as his father, fought like " a lion, until covered with the blood of the " wounds he received from the stones, that had " been showered upon him from all sides, he " was seized on, and carried away, with his " mother, two young brothers, and his sisters. " All that could be learned of the fate of Sultan " Shujah, himself, was, that, accompanied by " one woman, an eunuch, and two other persons, " he ascended the top of a mountain; that he " was wounded on the head with a stone, which " struck him down; but that the eunuch having " bound up the wound, with his own turban, " he arose again and escaped into the midst of " the woods. This relation I have heard re- " counted in many different ways, by those " even that were on the spot, which gave rise " to a variety of reports of this Prince, and " spread frequent alarms at the court of Delhi."

This writer, after giving a detail of the many conjectures, that were formed of the fate of Sultan Shujah, mentions, that he travelled from Bengal to Masulipatam, with an eunuch of that Prince, and his former commandant of artillery, who told him that Sultan Shujah was dead, but observed a strict reserve in communicating any farther information. Mr. Bernier supposes, that if Sultan Shujah was not slain on the place of action, he must have died, soon after; falling either into the hands of robbers, or a prey to the wild beasts, with which the forests of that country abound.

Subsequently to this event, the remaining branches of the family were thrown into prison, where they were treated with much rudeness; but after some time, Bernier says, they received a milder treatment, which was chiefly caused by the marriage of the eldest daughter of Sultan Shujah, with the King of Racan. The sequel of this event sets forth, that the servants of the Sultan Banque were discovered in forming another conspiracy, with those Mahometans, who have been already noticed, and that the King being now violently exasperated against this unfortunate family, ordered it to be extirpated; nor did any branch remain, excepting the Princess, whom he had espoused.*

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* I have been the more induced to insert this relation of the fate of Sultan Shujah, as it places the conclusion of a curious historical passage.

Cassum Ali Khan, in the last years of his government, retired to the fort of Mongheer, and, actuated by a keen resentment against the English, for their extensive encroachments on his authority, and the commerce of his country, he formed the plan of throwing off their yoke, and annihilating their influence in Bengal. In addition to these motives, he was urgently incited to the attempt by the officers of his court and army, who were necessarily alarmed at the diminution of their power and lucrative appointments. Amongst the foremost of these we find the Armenian Khojah Gregore, who, contrary to the usage of his country-men, had assumed the profession of arms, and had risen to high rank and confidence, in the service of Cassum Ali. He seems, with Sumroo, to have borne a principal part in the war against the English, which ultimately involved, as is well known, the ruin of Cassum, and the destruction of the Mahometan dominion in Bengal. Gregore also lost his life; for, on a suspicion of intriguing with the Armenians of Calcutta, he was cut off, previously to the expulsion of his master.

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in a point of view, different from that described by a late writer (Col. Dow) on the Empire of Hindostan; who, however well-founded his claims to accuracy, could not have attained the possession of more authentic documents, than a person, who was himself brought forward into the action of the day, and whose writings for the space of more than 100 years, have borne the test of truth.

With Cassum Ali * ended, virtually, the power of the subahdars of Bengal. Meer Jaffier, in his last administration, made a feeble attempt to resume his authority, but it soon terminated in his death, and in leaving the English the supreme rulers of an extensive and valuable territory.

I SHOULD be ill entitled to a place, even amongst the most trite observers, did I not, before I quitted this part of the country, throw my mite into the fund of general applause which has been bestowed on Mr. Cleveland. This gentleman, whom I never saw, but whose works loudly proclaim his merit, and diffuse his praise, has, by an equitable and judicious management of the Rajah Mahl and Bauglepour districts, considerably increased the number of inhabitants, and improved, as well as facilitated, the collection of the revenue. The increase of population is conspicuously seen in the dependency

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* Cassum Ali Chan, after wandering about the upper provinces, and soliciting the aid of various chiefs against the English, sought protection at the court of Delhi. He evinced the same intriguing and sanguinary disposition in domestic life, as had marked his public character. He endeavoured, it is said, to supplant the Minister at Delhi, by an offer of a large donation to the King; and he is accused of murdering, at different times, the women he carried with him from Bengal. At his death, which happened at the village of Kutwall, in 1777, the Court seized on his estate, the value of which was computed at *one thousand pounds*;—a small residue of the plunder of Bengal and Bahar!

of Mongheer, and in the extensive mercats of that place, which are resorted to by a concourse of various traders. He hath also made strenuous exertions, in drawing the adjacent Mountaineers, from their fastnesses to the plains. Nor have his labours failed of success. Twelve hundred of these men have entered into our service, and are embodied in a corps, which bears the appearance of becoming useful to the state. The indulgent treatment shewn them, with the superior advantages which they derive, must operate as powerful inducements to their brethren, in following so profitable an example. The depredations of these people had, at former periods, rendered the passage of the roads in that quarter so unsafe, that escorts were stationed at certain posts, for the protection of travellers; and detachments of two or three battalions, have occasionally been sent against the savage inhabitants of the Baglepour hills; who are now become the guardians of a country, which they had long wasted, by rapine and bloodshed.

Mr. Cleveland has established small buildings, at most of the halting places within his districts, for the accommodation of travellers; and the natives of those parts, who seem to have profited by the conduct of their chief, are peculiarly attentive to strangers. Such have been the advantages, which the state, and a body of people have derived, from the public spirit, and the benevolent efforts of one man! But his reward hath been bounteous and complete. He hath enjoyed the honour of exalting, in a distant land, the character of his nation, and felt sensations which transport the mind beyond the reach of fortune.

On the 3d of July, I left Mongheer; and arrived, on the 5th, at Patna, by water. This city is spacious and populous, though much fallen from the importance it held, during the residence of the Subahdar of Bahar. The great quantity of poppies cultivated in the contiguous districts, from which opium of an excellent quality is produced, together with extensive salt-petre works, have rendered Patna opulent, and the center of an extensive commerce. The different manufactures of silver, iron, and wood, are little inferior in this city, to those of Europe; and when the rudeness of the tools, with the simplicity of the process, is examined, the degree of delicacy which the artisans have acquired in their several professions, must challenge a high admiration.

The numerous ruins of public and private edifices, scattered through the town of Patna, and its environs, indicate a former grandeur and extent, which now no longer exist. An ancient name of this place, still known to some of the more intelligent inhabitants, and bearing an affinity to that given, by Strabo and Pliny, to the supposed capital of India, has suggested an opinion, that Patna occupies the situation of the celebrated Palibertha; which is farther substantiated by the geographical observations of Major Rennel.—Curiosity, and the desire of the moment to indulge a melancholy idea, led me to the spot, where the English were massacred by the order of Cassum Ali. The former buildings are removed, and a well-proportioned monument has been erected in commemoration of that dreadful event, though without any inscription. Perhaps it had been consistent with sounder policy, that no such memorial had been fixed; but as it was judged expedient to record, thus publicly, an act of treacherous cruelty, the cause, I think, should have been explained.

On the 13th of July, I left Patna, and on the same day arrived at Muzufferpour, the residence of the Collector of Tirhoot, an extensive district, about forty miles to the northward of Patna, and producing a revenue of about six and a half lacks of rupees.

In the neighbourhood of Muzufferpour, an action was fought in 1760, between Mherim, the eldest son of Meer Jaffier, assisted by the English troops, and Kadim Hussein Khan, the chief of Purnea, in which the latter was defeated.

A few days after the engagement, Mherim died, struck, it was said, by lightning. The father believed that his son had been cut off by an assassin, and he loudly accused Cassum Ali of the murder The event having removed a strong bar to Cassum's ambition, and there also appearing some suspicious circumstances, attending the alleged cause of his death, Meer Jaffier may be justified in believing, that his son had been taken off, by an avowed rival, who was seen at a subsequent period, indulging an implacable and sanguinary temper.

On the 30th of July, crossed the country, and went to Choprah, a long straggling town, lying on the northern side of the Ganges, about twenty miles above Patna. Choprah is the residence of the Collector of Sarun and Champoran; districts yielding an annual revenue of fourteen and an half lacks of rupees The French and Dutch had* factories at this place, chiefly for the purpose of manufacturing salt-petre, in which commodity this part of the country profusely abounds. It is not unworthy of notice to remark, that the Dutch, though obliged to purchase the greater portion of their crude salt-petre from the English, were enabled to sell it in its purified state, at a lower rate than that manufactured by the English Company, and of a superior quality. This commercial advantage, may be ascribed to the rigid system of œconomy observed by the Dutch in all their operations, and to a persevering attention to business, with which that people seem constitutionally endowed.

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* This letter was written during the war with France and Holland, when these places had been captured by the English.

On the 12th of August, left Choprah, and on the 17th arrived by water at Buxar. It was in the vicinity of this place that Cassum Ali, joined by Shujah-ud-Dowlah, with the whole of that Prince's army, made his last effort against the arms of the English. The superior numbers of the enemy who crowded the plains of Buxar, availed them little, when opposed to the small, but well arranged, and determined body of the English; who, after a smart action of two hours, completely routed the combined forces, and captured the whole of their artillery. This action, heretofore so amply described, had not perhaps now been adverted to, but for the impulse of an earnest desire of imprinting anew on your memory, the services performed on that day by the British troops; to whom their country stands indebted for a singular exaltation of its fame, and the acquisition of solid benefits.

The fort of Buxar, which, though small, is yet sufficiently tenable to resist the common attacks of a native power, stands on the exterior limits of the Bahar province. The present commandant has added to the strength of the fort by some late improvements; and for a more extensive protection of the inhabitants of the adjacent town, he has encompassed a wide space to the eastward of the fortifications, with a rampart and ditch.

The curiosities to be seen at Buxar are few, and, excepting one, not worthy of enumeration. But this one, the Hindoos hold in a degree of estimation not inferior to that of the Neapolitans for the blood of Saint Januarius, or those of their faith in general for the holy house at Loretto. The monument in question, which is erected on a small mount to the westward of the fort, is sacred to the memory of the Gold Ram, who is seen occasionally officiating as the Mars of the Hindoos; and is said to have the direction of war and victory. It would appear, that Ram, whilst a youth, made a visit to this eminence, and tarried on it for the space of seven days, where he was taught from some learned master of the science, the art of managing the bow, and wonderful were his feats with this weapon in after-times: indeed, were the most moderate of them to be recorded, it would be readily admitted without torturing the phrase, that Ram "drew a long bow."

AT the distance of two miles to the westward of Buxar, the Torin Nullah, a rivulet which falls into the Ganges, terminates the province of Bahar, and divides it from Benares. Though the Caramnassa river, from being of greater note than the Nullah, and running contiguous to it, is generally denominated the boundary. In crossing this river on service, the officers on the Bengal establishment become entitled to a double portion of their usual pay, for the better enabling them to defray the extraordinary expences incurred in countries far distant from the sea-coasts, and where European articles, from the charges of conveyance, sell at an advanced price.

THE view from Buxar into the Benares province, presents a scene of infinite gratification to the sense. You see an extended plain skirted by a broad winding river, and chequered with exuberant fields of corn, groves of lofty spreading trees, and large villages; the whole combines in it some of the grandest objects in nature, and impresses the mind with cheerfulness and content.

LEFT Buxar on the 23d, and arrived on the 26th at Benares, to which city from Mongheer, the distance by water is about 280 miles.

In the relation of this sailing excursion through the provinces, you will doubtless see many inaccuracies. You will likewise see that I have too narrowly circumscribed the description of a country, which with a fertility that conveys the idea of plenty, and national security, holds out to the eye, a grand and various scope of the most beautiful imagery.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours, &c. &c.

LETTER II.

Benares, 30th September, 1782.

My dear Sir,

Having given you a cursory detail of my journey from Calcutta to Benares, with the remarks that occurred; I will now lay before you the result of my enquiries and observations at this place. Should errors arise in the investigation of a subject, hitherto slightly discussed, and, from its extensive variety, perplexed and abstruse, I must entreat an indulgent eye; and though mistaken in my opinions, I presume to hope for some commendation, were it only for endeavouring to administer a rational pleasure.

The city of Benares, for its wealth, costly buildings, and the number of its inhabitants, is classed in the first of those now remaining in the possession of the Hindoos. To describe with a due degree of precision the various temples dedicated at Benares, to the almost innumerable deities, and to explain the origin of their foundation with the necessary arrangement, would require a knowledge far superior to mine in the mysterious subject of Hindoo Mythology. It is at this day enveloped in such deep obscurity, that even those pundits the most skilfully versed in the Sanscrit,* are not able to render it moderately comprehensible to the generality of people.

But as some relation of a city so famous in Hindoostan, and now so well known in Europe for supplying one of the grand sources of the religious worship of the Hindoos, and being the chief repository of the science yet existing among them, may not be unacceptable to you, together with a cursory investigation of the Mythology of Brimha; the task shall be attempted with attention to the object, and, I trust, with a strict adherence to truth.

At the distance of eight miles from the city of Benares, as it is approached on the river, from the eastward, the eye is attracted by the view of two lofty minarets, which were erected by Aurungzebe, on the foundation of an ancient Hindoo temple, dedicated to the Mhah Deve. The construction on this sacred ruin of so towering a Mahometan pile, which, from its elevated height, seems to look down with triumph and exultation on the fallen state of a city so profoundly revered by the Hindoos, would appear to have been prompted to the mind of Aurungzebe, by a bigoted and intemperate desire of insulting their religion. If such was his wish, it hath been completely fulfilled. For the Hindoos consider this monument; as the disgraceful record of a foreign yoke, proclaiming to every stranger, that their favourite city has been debased, and the worship of ther gods defiled. From the top of the minarets is seen the entire prospect of Benares, which occupies a space of about two miles and an half along the northern bank of the Ganges, and generally a mile inland from the river. Many of the houses, which are remarkably high, some of them having six and seven floors, are built of stone, resembling that species found in the quarries of Portland*, and which abounds in this part of the country. But the streets where these lofty buildings stand, are so narrow as not to admit of two common carriages abreast. In addition to the pernicious effect which must proceed from a confined atmosphere, there is, in the hot season, an intolerable stench arising from the many pieces of stagnated water dispersed in different quarters of the town, whose waters and borders are appropriated to the necessary uses of the inhabitants. The filth also, which is indiscriminately thrown into the streets, and there left exposed, (for the Hindoos possess but a small portion of general cleanliness,) add to the compound of ill smells, so offensive to the European inhabitants of this city. The irregular and compressed manner which has been invariably adopted in forming the streets of Benares, has destroyed the effects which symmetry and arrangement would have otherwise bestowed on a city, entitled, from its valuable buildings, to a preference of any capital which I have seen in India.

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* The language in which the sacred legends of the Hindoos have been preserved.

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* The Benares, or Chunar-Ghur stone, is closer grained and deeper coloured, than that of Portland.

In my research into the principles of the Hindoo religion, I received great aid from a conversant knowledge of the Marhatta language, and an acquaintance, though very trivial, with the Sanscrit. The use of this last tongue, now chiefly confined to a particular sect of Bramins, who officiate in the character of priests, hath ever been made the channel of conveying to the Hindoos, the essential tenets of their religion, with all the various forms of their worship. The Sanscrit is a sonorous language, abounding in pith and conciseness; and its periods flow with boldness, and terminate in a cadence peculiarly musical. An extract of a sloke, or stanza, which has been quoted by

Mr. Halhed, is a striking testimony of the nervous composition, and the laconic turn of the Sanscrit. Being composed of only four lines, I will insert it, and endeavour to give the translation literally, and in verse.

Pētāche — rĕnĕrvăn — shĕtrōō,
Father — in debt — enemy.
Mătāh — shĕtrōō — rĕshĕlēnēe,
Mother — enemy — extravagant, or immoral.
Bhārĭah — rŭpĕrvūttēē— shĕtrōō,
Wife — beautiful — enemy.
Pōōtrĕ — shĕtrōō — n′pūndĭtāh,
Son — enemy — unlearned.

The mother who hath lost her fame,
The Sire profuse and foe to shame,
Are to their race a pest;
A Bride's soft joys oft' thorns implant,
And he who roams in folly's haunt,
Destroys his father's rest.

The Hindoos believe in one God, without beginning and without end, on whom they bestow, descriptive of his powers, a variety of epithets. But the most common appellation, and which conveys the sublimest sense of his greatness, is, Sree Mun Narrain*. The Hindoos, in their supplication to the Deity, address him as endowed with the three attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, which in the Sanscrit are expressed by the terms, Neerangin, Neerakar, and Neergoon. Though these terms may not, in literary strictness, comprise the precise meaning of the English text, they convey it virtually, and in the amplest sense. The Hindoos likewise believe, that the Supreme Deity possesses a threefold form, the parts of which are said to be separate. It is composed of Sree Mun Narrain, who is supposed to represent a human form; the Alhah Letchinry, described as a beautiful woman; and a serpent on which the Deity is seated. This emblematical assemblage, a symbol of strength, love, and wisdom, according

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* There is reason to believe, that in the more early periods of time, before the priests of the Hindoos had found it expedient, for the firmer establishment of their sway over the minds of the people,

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to raise a huge superstructure of emblematical worship, the temples erected to the Supreme Being were plain, and void of personification: the remains of one of these are now to be seen on the summit of a hill, near the city of Kashmire; which, according to tradition, had been dedicated to the Creator of the world; in which the prayers of those who entered, were addressed to the Deity without supplicating the intercession of an intermediate agent, and where no image, or symbol of Divine power, had a place. A gentleman of curious research on the coast of Coromandel, informed me, that at Chilemberum, about 20 miles to the southward of Cudalore, he saw a religious Hindoo edifice, plain, and without any interior figure, which was devoted to the worship of "the Invisible God," and was never approached but with tokens of profound awe and reverence.

to the Hindoo faith, is wholly spiritual, and is never represented in their temples by any object of matter: they say it is indivisible, and of infinite space*.

In the beginning, the Hindoos believe that the Deity created three men, to whom he gave the names of Brimha, Vystnow, and Shevah†. To the first was committed the power of creating mankind;—to the second, of cherishing them;—and to the third, that of restraining, correcting, and destroying them‡. Brimha at one breath formed the human kind out of the four elements, amongst which he infused, if I understand the interpretation, and may be allowed the term, a vacuum§.

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[*] Perhaps the mysterious Triad of Plato, who made a free use of Eastern knowledge, may have been formed from Indian materials.

[†] Called also Eishever, and Mhah Deve.

[‡] In the capacity of Mhah Deve, he is denominated "The Destructive Power."

[§] The word in the Sanscrit language, is *akash*, the proper signification of which, I believe, I was not at the time, accurately informed of; for it should seem, that Hindoos do not admit of a vacuum, in their system of nature: *akash* means, in a general acceptation, aërial space; but in the present sense, I am induced to think that it is designed by the Hindoos, to denote the grand vivifying principle, termed in ancient fable, the Promethean fire, supposed to have animated the human body.—In this note, it may not be uninteresting to introduce a tenet of the Egyptian theological philosophers, which corresponds with the idea I have formed of the *akash* of the Hindoos, and also, certain opinions

Before the creation of man, Sree Mun Narrain formed the world out of a perplexed aggregation of matter, which had been covered with

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entertained by them of the formation of the world, and the creation of animated bodies. These philosophical priests, who professed the tenets of Menes, their first law-giver, (whom they had deified, and intitled Osiris, or the Sun), said that fire, or rather a refined spirit, which they distinguished from the elemental fire, was diffused through all nature, and composed the essence of that being, who first gave form and order to matter. They believed that five elements,—the mind, fire, air, earth, and water, constituted the entire world: they called the mind Jupiter, which signifies the source of life, and they considered him the father of all intelligent beings. The fire they termed Vulcan, who, they alledged, contributed chiefly to the production and perfection of all things. Earth, being as it were the bosom in which all things receive the principles of life, was known by the designation of Mother. The water was called Ocean, to which they gave the name of the Nursing Mother. The air was denominated Minerva, and believed to be the daughter of Jupiter, sprung from his brain, and always a virgin, as this element is incorruptible, and rises to Heaven.—The Egyptian philosophers supposed, that all the original matter of the universe had been immerged in a chaos, and was gradually separated from it by fermentation; that the air was in continual agitation; that the fire, liberated from the grosser matter, had ascended, and formed the sun and stars, the highest objects of the universe; that spirit, or the mind, the most subtile part of fire, was dispersed through all parts, to animate life, and impart voluntary motion. They added, that the earth and water, which after the separation of the air were yet embodied, became a globe, which constantly revolving on its axis, by a motion excited by the fire the separation of the two bodies was effected; and that the rays of the sun, making new fermentations on the surface of the earth, yet soft and slimy, produced numerous excrescences, which, nourished and strengthened by the gross vapours of the night,—the action of the moon,—and afterwards, by the heat of the day, the waters, and inhabited by a demon, the supposed author of evil, whom the Godhead drove into an abyss under the earth*.

THE Hindoos, as Mr. Halhed, in his translation of the Code of Hindoo Laws, has fully set forth, are arranged in four grand casts, or tribes †; that of the Bramin, the Chittery, the Bhyse, and the Sooder. Each of these casts is subdivided into numerous sects, the particular

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appeared at length, in the forms of different animals. Those in whom the fire predominated, mounted into air, and became birds: those which participated more of earth, as men, quadrupeds, and reptiles, remained on the surface, while the more aqueous substances descended to the waters, their proper place of abode. It was necessary to give reasons, why nature had stopped in her primary operations, and did not form many more animal creatures, as the manner of formation had been so simple and easy. Systematic philosophy, even in its infancy, did not want resource; and that of the Egyptians has met the objection, by urging, that nature had originally inspired every species of animals with the instinct of propagation; having sagely foreseen, that when the sun and the winds had entirely dried the earth, it would be incapable of producing perfect animals. See Mr. Labbathier's History of Ancient Nations, translated by Mr. Stockdale.

[*] The writers of the Hindoo mythology, have given various and diffuse descriptions of the origin of the world, and of the human and animal race, but unite in blending them with a series of extravagant and disgusting fables.

[†] There is in India an aboriginal race of people, who are not classed in any of the sects, and confined to the most menial offices. They are not permitted to enter any temple of the Hindoos, and they observe no restriction. On some parts of the coast of Coromandel, they are called Dheres and Pariahs; and, in Bengal, Harees.

usages of which are preserved with care and attentive distinctions. There are sectaries, also of the same tribe, who do not admit of the intercourse of marriage with each other, or of eating at the same board. It should seem, that the genuine race of the Chittery has for a great length of time been extinct, and that its place is now occupied by a spurious tribe. The Hindoos composing these casts and classes, are ultimately branched in two divisions; the one denominated Vystnow Bukht; the other, Sheva Bukht. The followers of the former deity are usually distinguished by a longitudinal mark on the forehead, whilst those of the latter draw a parallel line on that part. Vystnow is worshipped under the representation of a human figure, having a circle of heads, and four hands; emblems of an all-seeing and all-provident Being. The figure of a fabulous bird, on which he is supposed to ride, and denoting the velocity of his motion, is occasionally placed in front of this image. Sheva, or Eishwer, and, as he is often denominated by the Hindoos, the Mhah Deve, is usually represented by a compound figure, describing the male and female parts of generation, and designed as the symbol of procreation and fecundity: these faculties, or qualities, being classed amongst the choicest blessings of the Hindoos, and the deprivation of them deemed a severe reproach and misfortune. Facing this designation of Mhah Deve, is sometimes seen, in a suppliant posture, the statue of a cow, or bull ; an animal said to have derived his sacred qualities, from having been chosen by this god, as the favourite medium of his conveyance. But the more enlightened pundits say, that this creature hath been preserved from slaughter, by its great utility to man ; it being his ablest assistant in the labours of the field, and the chief provider of his immediate sustenance*. It doubtless argues a sound policy in the Hindoos, to stamp the ox with this sacred mark ; for were its flesh eaten, as Hindostan is thinly supplied with horses, the various branches of agriculture would suffer an essential injury.

Another figure represents Sheva, with four hands, holding different emblems of his power ; and five heads, four of which are directed to the cardinal points, and the fifth is placed with the face upwards, in the supposed act of contemplating the godhead. This deity, who occupies numerous forms, is figured also with three eyes, one of which is placed in the forehead.

In gratitude for the service which Brimha has performed on earth, it would reasonably be supposed, that the thanksgiving of his people would in some degree be proportioned to his works. But the Hindoos have not dedicated one temple to his honour ; nor have they established a single festival, in remembrance of his deeds. It would redound but little to my credit, did I insert in this place the reasons alleged in their religious tracts, for the neglect of Brimha. It is a tale framed to amuse the credulous Hindoo, and procure a meal to an artful priest. The ostensible want of attention to the memory of Brimha, may on a more abstracted ground be ascribed to an opinion, that the powers of procreation having been primarily set in action, and operating by a law impulsive and undeviating, whose immediate benefits exist, and are conspicuously displayed in its effects, no ritual necessity called for the commemoration of its first cause, or the propitiation of its future influence.

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* Milk and butter compose a great part of the aliment of an Hindoo.

The Hindoos believe implicitly in predestination, and in the transmigration of the soul. The first, though it may operate in cramping the genius and obstructing its progressive powers, has a happy tendency in assuaging their misfortunes, and administering a comfort in all the wants of life. They say, it is the hand of God, which for some inscrutable purpose, directs and impels the actions of his creatures. The doctrine of Metempsychosis restrains them from the use of animal food[*], an aliment not necessary in a hot climate, and often attended with pernicious consequences. This restriction may also have contributed to infuse into the minds an abhorrence of sanguinary acts, and inculcate the virtues of humanity and general philanthropy.

The Hindoos compute their grand evolutions of time by epochs, called in their language Jogues, of which there are four, corresponding, in the ascribed qualities, with the golden, silver, brazen, and iron ages of the ancients. The present, they say, is the Khullee,[†] or the fourth Jogue; and that at the expiration of every age, the Supreme Being has destroyed the world, and that a continued succession of Jogues will revolve *ad infinitum*. The records of this ancient people teem so profusely with fable, and abound throughout in such extravagant relations of their demigods, similar in their feats to the Bacchus, Hercules, and Theseus of the Greeks, that no rational or satisfactory conclusion can be drawn, for any adjustment of chronology. A pundit will introduce into his legend a lack* of years, with as much facility, and perhaps conviction to himself, as our commentators of theological history would reduce to their standard, half a century.

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[*] This tenet is not, at this day, strictly adhered to; for the Hindoos of the second and fourth cast occasionally use flesh meat, and the Bramins of Bengal invariably eat fish.

[†] The Christian æra, 1787, corresponds with 4888, of the Khullee Jogue.

THE principles of the Hindoo religion, with its most essential tenets, were composed, it is asserted, by Brimha, and comprised in four books, intitled the Bairds or Vaids; a word in the Sanscrit language signifying mystery. In that part of the peninsula of India bordering on the Coromandel side, these sacred writings are named the Vaidums. The Talinghahs and Malabars make little distinction between the letters B, and V, and invariably terminate with an M, all Sanscrit words. The Shastre is a voluminous commentary on the Bairds, and has been written by various pundits, for the purpose of illustrating the Hindoo Mythology. From the Shastre proceed those preposterous ceremonies, which have been dragged into the Hindoo system of worship, all tending to shackle the vulgar mind, and produce in it a slavish reverence for the tribe of Bramins. The privilege of reading the Bairds, and expounding its texts, is only allowed to them; and prohibited to the other casts, under severe penalties. By the sole investment of this important authority, the priest is left at liberty to explain the original doctrine in the manner that may most forcibly consolidate the power and promote the interest of his order. In the transmigration of the soul into different bodies, consists the various gradations of reward and punishment amongst the Hindoos. Conformably to their actions, they are transposed into such bodies, whether of the human or brute species, as their conduct, whilst they occupied their former tenements, may have merited. They do not admit of eternal punishments, and shudder at the idea of a belief so disconsonant to the opinion which they have formed of the Supreme Being.

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* An hundred thousand.

Evil dispositions, they say, are chastised by a confinement in the bodies of those animals, whom they most resemble in their nature; and are constrained to occupy them, till their vices are either eradicated, or sufficiently qualified to deserve the possession of superior forms. The good actions of man, the Hindoo law-giver has written, will be rewarded by his admission into those bodies which enjoy the utmost human happiness; as that which the magistrate feels on the just and merciful execution of the trust which has been committed to him; or that high sense of pleasure which the man of humanity participates, when he has alleviated the distresses of the unfortunate, or otherwise promoted the welfare of mankind.—After a certain series of transmigration, rendered acceptable to the Deity by a pursuit of virtue, and when his soul shall be completely purified from the taints of evil, the Hindoo is admitted to a participation of the radiant and never-ceasing glory of his first Cause *. The soul's receiving this act of bliss, is described by comparing it to a ray of light, attracted by the grand powers of the sun, to which it shoots with an immense velocity, and is there absorbed in the blaze of splendour.

Yum Durm Rajah officiates in the same capacity amongst the Hindoos, as Minos did in the infernal regions of tha ancients. All souls liberated from the body, are supposed to appear at the tribunal of Yum Durm, where their former actions are proclaimed aloud, and examined by this judge, who passes an immediate sentence. Should the disposition of a man have been so flagitiously depraved, as to be judged unworthy, even of an introduction into the body of the vilest animal, such corporal punishment is imposed on him, as may be thought adequate to his crimes; and the soul is afterwards placed in some suitable station on earth. According to the religious tradition of the Hindoos, Sree

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The union of the human soul with the divine etherial substance of the universe, is the ancient doctrine of Pythagoras and Plato; but it seems to exclude any personal or conscious immortality. See Gibbon's History, volume 4th, p. 202, in a note.

Mun Narrain, since the creation of the world, has at nine different periods assumed incarnated forms, either for the purpose of eradicating some terrestrial evil, or chastising the sins of mankind[*]. The Hindoos worship a secondary species of deity, which they wildly multiply to the number of thirty-three crores[†], who, in their different functions, are designed to represent the numberless attributes of the Supreme Deity.

FROM the crowd of images which the Bramin has placed in the temples of the Hindoos, they have been branded with the appellation of idolaters. When this mode of offering supplications or thanksgiving to the Supreme Being is dispassionately examined, it will be seen, that a personification of the attributes of the Deity is not unfitly adapted to the general comprehension. Those (and they compose a great portion of the people) who are not endowed with the ability of reading the praise of God, can with facility conceive a certain idea of his greatness, in contemplating a figure, sculptured with many heads and with many hands, adorned with every symbol of human power, and beheld by all classes of men with unfeigned reverence. The origin of emblematical figures has long preceded the use of letters. We find in the Spanish records, that intelligence of the first arrival of the Europeans on the coast of Mexico, was described to Montezuma by figures painted on cotton cloth. In a rude society, it was evidently a more easy operation to convey an idea through the medium of a figure cut in wood or moulded in clay, than to invent an alphabet, and out of it compose a regulated assemblage of words, necessary for the formation of a written language.

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[*] According to the Hindoo tradition, a tenth incarnation of the Deity is yet expected.

[†] A crore is a hundred lacks.

The immense group of Hindoo gods enjoy immortality, with which they are gifted by drinking a water called Amrut, a mythological beverage, bearing some analogy to the nectar of Homer's deities. In the mythology of the Hindoos is found an elegant description of nine goddesses, resembling, in a certain degree, the Muses of the ancients, in the nature of their occupations. There is also most picturesquely delineated, the god of Love, who has a variety of epithets, all significant of the unbounded sway which he possesses over the hearts of men. His common names are Kaum and Mudden, and he is represented as a pleasing youth, armed with a bow of sugar-cane, strung with the stings of bees; and five arrows, denoting the five senses, each of which is baited with different qualities of the poison of love. A picture was found at

Tanjore, when the fort was captured, riding on an elephant*, whose form was composed of the figures of seven young women, entwined together in so ingenious and whimsical a manner, as to exhibit an exact shape of that bulky animal. In the Bess † Eishwer Pagoda at Benares, is seen a stone figure, well executed, of the god of the Sun, sitting in a chariot, and driving a horse with twelve heads, an evident allusion to the divisions of the ecliptic.

WITHOUT putting etymology to the torture, or moulding to the shape of his system the deceitful aids of chronology, the careful observer might be enabled to trace some parts of the religious worship of the Hindoos into Egypt. He would discover the sacred Bull or Cow of Sheva, placed high in the holy legends of the Coptis; and he would see the Snake, one of the mysterious associates of Sree Mun Narrain, devoutly revered by that nation, as the hieroglyphic of wisdom and longevity. It would appear that the onion, mentioned by historians to be held in such profound veneration amongst the Egyptians, is no less marked with reverence in Hindostan; where, though the use of a vegetable diet is strongly inculcated, and, with not a very large deviation, usually adopted, the onion is forbidden to many of the sects; and in the upper part of India, when an oath, on which a matter of importance depends, is administered, the Bramin frequently introduces the onion, to render the ceremony more sacred.

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* It is also said to represent Kishin, an incarnated form of the Deity.

† An abbreviated compound of Vystnow, or Bishen and Eishwer. In this temple, which is dedicated to these two deities in conjunction, the sectaries of both offer up their prayers.

IN comparing the religious worship of the Hindoos with that of the ancients, the functions of some of the Deities appear conspicuously uniform; and were it possible to procure a description of the occupations and various powers of the Hindoo subaltern gods, it might be found, that the group of the western pantheon had been selected from the divine assembly of Brimha. The Egyptians and the Greeks, in their commerce with India, through the channel of the Red Sea, have left, I have been sometimes induced to believe, tokens behind them of their connection with the Hindoos. In the collection of a gentleman at Benares are several valuable antiques, which were purchased by the merchants of that city: one of which, representing a matron, is cut in a manner bearing every mark of Grecian skill; and another exhibited Cleopatra in the act of being bitten by the asp. The same gentleman had in his possession a Medusa's head, on an emerald, found also at Benares, which being sent to England, was unreservedly acknowledged to be the work of a Grecian or Roman master. Some years ago, a high-finished cameo was procured at Guzerat, whereon Hercules slaying the Nemean lion, was executed with much taste and spirit. These circumstances are adduced to support a conjecture, that, during the intercourse which existed between the natives of Egypt and India, the former might have introduced into their country, with some of the rare and luxuriant products of Hindoostan, certain tenets and ceremonies of Hindoo mythology. In endeavouring to point out the track of these antiques, it is to be noticed, that they might have found a way into India in the cabinets of the Mahometans, who in the more early period of their empire, were little less enthusiastic in the admiration of Grecian productions and literature, than the Romans. And it is a fact in need of no illustration, that the revival of letters and the arts, after the Roman world had been immersed in Gothic ruin, received a powerful aid from the princes of the Khaliphat.

My knowledge of astronomy is so confined, that I am almost incapacitated from describing the attainment of the Bramins in that science, long before the æra in which it flourished in the eastern world. The zodiac, with its twelve signs, is well known to the Hindoos, and they have bestowed on the seven days of the week, which commences with Sunday, the names of the planets. The solar year * of the Hindoos, which is arranged in six seasons, consists of twelve months, containing three hundred and sixty-five days; and once in the term of four years an additional day is annexed for the completion of the earth's precise revolutions round the sun. Commercial transactions and writings of correspondence are dated amongst the Hindoos according to the lunar, or Lumbut year, which commences about the period of the vernal equinox. The month is calculated from the full moon, and is divided into thirty equal parts. Those comprehending the moon's increase, are termed Bood, and the portion of its wain, Bole, or Bood. On the third year of the Lumbut, an extraordinary month is intercalated, for the inclusion of the time required in equalizing the

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* The solar, or, as it is denominated by the Hindoos, the Lunkrant year, begins on the 10th or 11th of April, and its months are composed occasionally of 29, 30, 31, and 32 days. The common epocha of Hindoostan was established by the Rajah Vickerum Mhaject, and founded 57 years before the birth of Christ. Some Hindoo nations compute their time from other periods, as in Bengal; but their historical writings are generally adapted to the year of Vickerum Mhaject; who was much celebrated in Hindoostan, for his magnificence, and liberal protection of men of genius

lunar and solar systems. The Joaguels are divided into cycles of twelve and sixty years, each of which is distinguished by its peculiar denomination *. The observatory at Benares, though rude in its structure, and containing instruments suitably coarse, proves notwithstanding, that the Hindoos possess the knowledge of ascertaining the motions of the heavenly bodies. Could access be obtained to such records of the Hindoos as are divested of that redundancy of fable with which their priests have so copiously interwoven them, it would not be presumptuous to suppose, that we would discover they had been, in the more early ages of the world, one of the most enlightened and powerful nations that inhabited the earth.

THE empire of the Hindoos, as related in many of their historical tracts, consisted of fifty-six separate principalities, ultimately governed by one prince, whose kingdom extended from the southern limits of Tartary to the island of

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* The Hindoos, I believe, commonly class their time in cycles of sixty years, though that of twelve is also well known to them. Amongst some articles of plunder, captured by the Company's troops in Bantan Fort, was found, with other objects of the Hindoo worship, an image of the Mhah Deve, and a printed representation of the figures describing the Tartar cycle, which is composed of 12 years. This figurative mode of marking time, which has prevailed from high antiquity in Japan, China, Siam, and through the vast regions of Tartary, is at this day observed in the Turkish Empire.

Ceylon, and from the confines of Assam and Arracan to the river Indus. This extensive space was inhabited by a people who were divided into four distinct tribes, each exercising different functions, but all uniting in their various branches to promote the general good. It abounded in fair and opulent cities, which were decorated with magnificent temples for the worship of the gods; and with sumptuous mansions, gardens, and fountains, for the pleasure and the accommodation of the inhabitants. Useful and elegant artisans, skilled in raising stupendous buildings, in fabricating gold, silver, and the most delicate cotton cloths, and in the curious workmanship of precious stones and metals, all found encouragement in the exercise of their professions*. Salutary ordinances directed the Hindoos in the punishment of crimes and the security of property; and when some daring indulgences in favour of the sacred tribe are excepted, we must yield an unreserved approbation to the justice and wisdom of their laws. The traveller was enabled to journey through this extensive empire, with an ease and safety, unknown in other countries. The public roads were shaded with trees; and frequent habitations, accommodated with a pond or well, were founded for the conveniency of the passenger; and should he have been pillaged in any part of the country, the district in which the damage had been sustained, was obliged to make restitution.—When this empire, its polished people, and the progress which science had made amongst them, are attentively considered; when, at the same period, a retrospective view is thrown on the states of the European world, then immersed in, or emerging from, ignorance and barbarity, we must behold Hindostan with wonder and respect; and we may assert without forfeiting the claims of truth and moderation, that, however far the European world now outstrips the nations of the East, the followers of Brimha in the early periods of life, were possessed of a fund amply stored with valuable materials of philosophy and useful knowledge. The humane mind will naturally feel a sense of sorrow and pity for a people, who have fallen from so conspicuous a height of glory and fortune, and who probably have contributed to polish and exalt the nations, who now hold them in subjectiom.

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* This description may be judged chimerical and extravagant by those who have not witnessed the construction of the ancient Hindoo monuments, or examined the History of their empire when it first belonged to the Mahometans. These soldiers are represented to have been fascinated by the display of its grandeur, and to have stood amazed at the treasures that were disclosed. Vide Dow's Relation of the Plunder of the Samnaut Temple.

To form an accurate judgement of the genius of the Hindoos, or to describe the limit to which they extended art and science, it were requisite, could the necessary materials be procured, to exhibit the condition of their empire, before it had felt the severe and victorious arms of the Mahometans.—A partial and degrading relation would be made of the Hindoos, were a description of their laws, government, and manner, taken from the appearance they make at this day in the eye of the world. Hindostan was overthrown by a fierce race of men, who in their rapid course of conquest, exerted the most furious efforts in levelling every monument of worship and taste. They massacred the priests and plundered the temples, with a keenness and ferocity, in which their first chiefs might have gloried. A people thus crushed, groaning under the load of oppression, and dismayed at the sight of incessant cruelties, must soon have lost the spirit of science, and the exertion of genius; especially as the fine arts were so blended with their system of religion, that the persecution of the one, must have shed a baneful influence on the existence of the other. To decide on, or affix, the character of the Hindoo, from the point of view in which he is now beheld, would, in a large degree, be similar to the attempt of conveying an exact idea of ancient Greece, from the materials now presented by that wretched country. The disquisition of the man of philanthropy, liberated from the fetters of prejudice, will be far different:—he will enjoy congenial pleasure, in dispelling the shade of obscurity, which hath long enveloped the history of the Hindoo: he will endeavour to carry it back to that æra of grandeur, which his country enjoyed in her day of prosperity, and there hold him out to the information of mankind; the generality of whom, whether from motives of contempt, or habits of indolence, have yet acquired but a trivial and incorrect knowledge of this ancient people. It will then be seen, that the genius of the Hindoos was happily led on and that their bent of disposition was aptly regulated and attempered by the rules established for the performance of their several professions. A precision which repelled the encroachments of error or design, prescribed to them their respective duties in the state, and in society, and wholly precluded any other sect from infringing on the privileges of another. The Bramin was invested with the uncontrolled guardianship of religion; he became the perpetual medium, through which the inferior classes addressed their god: he was also, the sole depositary and instructor of science, and to his care and ability was intrusted the education of youth. The importance of these offices must have given to the Bramin great sway in a community where a knowledge of religious worship, from its complex variety, becomes a task of arduous labour; and where, at the same time, a performance of the rites of his religion, is deemed an obligation indispensably incumbent on the Hindoo, in his acquisition of future happiness. These employments were judged of sufficient magnitude to occupy the whole attention of the Bramin, and he was strictly interdicted from all temporal affairs. The authority of exercising the functions of royalty, seems to have devolved without reserve on the Chittery or Rajah, and his possessions were held hereditary in the line of legitimate male primogeniture. The youngest branch of this race was employed in the army, and entrusted with the charge of the forts and strong holds of the country. The occupation of a merchant, with the transactions of traffic, was committed to the Bhyse, or Banian, and it was declared unlawful for the other tribes to engage in commerce. The husbandman, the artisan, the private soldier, and the labourer, compose the Looder, or the fourth cast of Hindoo; and each of these respective professions was exclusively pursued. Thus, distinctly arranged, and on the severest penalties prohibited from extraneous mixture, or the admission of proselytes, the Hindoo government acquired an uniformity and vigour, the natural result of its principles*.

WERE an analogy ascertained between the mythology of the Hindoos and Egyptians, perceptible traces of which are occasionally presented, it might then become a matter of doubt which people, for the greatest space of time, have been the most polished and enlightened. From the examples which have been brought forward for the explanation of some of the most conspicuous parts of the mythology of the Hindoos, and to demonstrate the probable antiquity of that nation, it may seem that I favour the belief of Egypt's having received a portion of her stock of science and religion from India. With a deference to popular opinion, and disclaiming all fabrication of system, I must avow an inclination to this opinion. One fact amongst some others, afforded me a fair proof of the high antiquity of the Hindoos, as a civilized nation, and marks a strong disapprobation of a foreign intercourse.

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* Many of the fences that marked the limits of the respective tribes, are now broken down. The Bramins of the Decan and Punjal, have taken up the sword, and are seen crowding the ranks of an army; the Chittery occasionally takes himself to traffic, and the Sooder has become the inheritor of principalities. Mararow, the gallant Marhatta officer and chief of Ghooty, was of the fourth cast of Hindoos.

THEY are forbidden to cross the river Attoc, the name of which, in certain dialects of their language, signifies prohibition; and should they pass this boundary, they are held unclean, and in the strict sense of religious law, forfeit their rank in the tribes they may be classed in. They were also, either forbidden from embarking on the ocean, or they were deterred from undertaking marine expeditions, by the difficulties incurred in procuring at sea, the requisite diet for a Hindoo. The probability therefore is not apparent, that any part of a people fenced in by this restriction, and who were so proudly centered in themselves, as to reject with abhorrence, the admission of proselytes, would have emigrated into a distant country, and brought from thence a system of religious worship; nor does any probable tradition authorize the belief of an Egyptian colony having been established in India. The capacious space which Hindostan occupies on the face of the globe, the advantages it derives from soil and climate, and from its numerous rivers, some of them of the first class of magnitude, may be adduced as reasonable arguments of its having been peopled at a more early period of time than Egypt, which does not possess the like local benefits. If the degree of perfection which manufactures have attained, be received as a criterion to judge of the progress of civilization, and if it be also admitted as a test of deciding on the antiquity of a people, who adopt no foreign improvements, little hesitation would occur, in bestowing the palm of precedence on Hindostan, whose fabrics of the most delicate and beautiful contexture, have been long held in admiration, and have hitherto stood unrivalled. Let me conclude this comparative view, with observing, and I trust dispassionately, that when we see a people possessed of an ample stock of science of well digested ordinances, for the protection and improvement of society—and of a religion whose tenets consist of the utmost refinement, and variety of ceremony—and, at the same time, observe amongst other Asiatic nations, and the Egyptians of former times, but partial distributions of knowledge, law, and religion—we must be led to entertain a supposition, that the proprietors of the lesser, have been supplied from the sources of the greater fund. These reflections which have been furnished by experience and various information, will perhaps afford more satisfaction, than the laboured and perplexed proofs of dates and etymology, which are often framed, as they most commodiously accord with some favourite hypothesis.

Amongst the Hindoos, marriage,* when it can be performed with any degree of conveniency, is deemed an indispensable duty, and it is believed, that propagating the species in that state, entitles parents to singular marks of the Divine favour. They shew a disapprobation of celibacy by many marks of opprobrium and scorn; and I have frequently observed, that when a Hindoo, from question, or other causes, has been brought to the affirmation of his single state, he has appeared disconcerted and ashamed, and immediately attributed his solitary condition to ill fortune, or some domestic inconveniency. It is to this institution, which is strongly recommended, and, I may say, even enforced, that the generally extensive population of Hindostan and its speedy recovery from the calamities of war and famine, may be largely ascribed. The entire system of domestic ordinance and œconomy of the Hindoos, is founded on a firm, yet simple basis; from which arise effects, happy in themselves, and powerfully operative in uniting the bonds of society. By the ancient laws of the country, the wife depends for the enjoyment

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[*] This word, used in the Sanscrit language, is often termed Callian, which signifies pleasure. The Hindoos, in common usage, have but one wife, and when this rule is deviated from, it is considered a species of indecency. There is a set, though not numerous, of mendicants, called Joguees, or Byraghees, who live in a state of celibacy.

of every pleasure, as well as for most of the ordinary accommodations of life, on the immediate existence of her husband; and it becomes her invariable interest to preserve his health, as much of her happiness is centered in his living to an old age. On the demise of the husband, the wife virtually devolves into a *caput mortuum;* she is not permitted to marry again, she is deprived of all consequence in the family, and divested of the marks of ornament and distinction. There are certain religious ceremonies not lawful for her to perform, and in some instances, she is held unclean; but on all occasions, after the husband's death, the widow is classed in the house as a slave or a menial servant.—But this usage has not so generally prevailed in latter times. The wives of the deceased Hindoos have moderated that spirit of enthusiastic pride, or impulse of affection, which was used to urge them to self-destruction on the pile of their husbands. Their grief can now be assuaged, and their religious duties reconciled, by a participation of domestic comforts; and many of the Hindoo widows, especially in the Marhatta country, have acquired by their ability, their wealth, connection, or intrigue, the possession of extensive power and influence. Amongst the superior tribes of the Hindoos, where the sense of honour or shame is more delicately preserved, rather than suffer a degradation, by which female attractions are extinguished, and the pride and spirit of the sex depressed, the women are impelled, by a furious courage, softened by the term of matrimonial affection, to terminate the misery of their condition in death. According to a passage of the Shaster of the Hindoos, which I examined by the help of an interpreter, it is specifically ordained, that a wife ought to burn herself at her husband's death; should she not possess the resolution of sustaining this trial, she is directed to make a pilgrimage to some of the sacred places of Hindoo ablution, as Benares, Allahabad, Ghyah, &c. and there, appropriating her property to charitable uses, offer up a sacrifice of her hair to the memory of her husband. She is not to decorate her person with jewels, with gold, silver, or any female ornament: she is not to use perfumes, nor eat flesh, fish, or butter; but to live on plain barley or wheaten bread, and eat but once in a day. Her time is to be employed in the constant worship of God, and the purification of her mind, from anger, malice, and avarice; and she is to withdraw herself from all the concerns of the world. If her life is passed in these acts, she is promised after death to enter heaven, without suffering intermediate purgation. In addition to the dread of so degraded a state of mortification, the widow on the other side is told by the Bramins, that the performance of the act of self-destruction will entitle her to an ample participation of exquisite future joys, and will ensure to her progeny the pre-eminent favour of the Deity. Though the issue of such a resolution forcibly affects those feelings of humanity cherished amongst European nations, yet as the usage appears to originate in a cause tending to strengthen domestic policy, it ought not to be hastily condemned, or imputed altogether to the dictates of cruelty or injustice.

Conformably to the state of subordination in which Hindoo women are placed, it has been judged expedient to debar them the use of letters. The Hindoos hold the invariable language, that acquired accomplishments are not necessary to the domestic classes of the female sex, whether for contributing to her individual happiness, or preserving the decorum of character, and simplicity of manners, which alone render her useful or amiable, in the estimation of her family. They urge that a knowledge of literature would conduce to draw a woman from her household cares, and give a disrelish to those offices, in which consist the only satisfaction and amusement that she can, with propriety, and an observance of rectitude, partake of; and such is the force of custom, that a Hindoo woman would incur a severe reproach, were it known that she could read or write. The Hindoo dancing girls, whose occupations are avowedly devoted to the public pleasure, are, on the contrary taught the use of letters, and are minutely instructed in the knowledge of every attraction and blandishment, which can operate in communicating the sensual pleasure of love. These women are not obliged to seek shelter in private haunts, nor are they, on account of their professional conduct, marked with opprobrious stigma. They compose a particular class of society, and enjoy the avowed protection of government, for which they are assessed according to their several capacities. No religious ceremony or festival is thought to be completely performed, without the accompaniment of dancing women. They usually attend on a certain day of the week, at the court of the prince or governor of the district, either to make an obeisance, or exhibit a professional entertainment; and in some of the provinces, they are endowed with grants of the public lands *

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* The Hindoo dancing-women are here only alluded to, and those particularly who assist (which is a numerous class) at the ceremonies of worship. As they receive a maintenance from the revenue of the pagoda, or from private persons, they are not driven by necessity into a promiscuous intercourse with the world. But it is to be observed, that those who do not receive any permanent stipend, are little less dissolute and abandoned in their habits of life, than a female of similar description in European countries.

AN HINDOO family is governed with efficient power by the male senior member, to whom the other branches shew an attentive respect, and in domestic life a ready submission. A son will not sit in the presence of his father without express desire, and in his deportment and conversation, observes to him a dutiful, as well as affectionate, behaviour. In the course of a long residence in India, and rather a close investigation of Hindoo customs and manners, I never discovered what our language has termed a free-thinker*. The most celebrated characters amongst the Hindoos, and their men of the world, [illegible] Scindia, Nanah Purnawees†, and the Bhohulla, believe the tenets of the doctrine of Brimha with as much sincerity, and practise the minutest ceremony with as much scrupulous attention, as the simplest or most bigoted peasant in the country.

I am, Dear Sir,
Yours, &c. &c.

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* There are some schismatic sects found amongst the Hindoos, and even classes of that people, who reject the authority of the Bards, and the whole construction of Bramin mythology; but however pure the original mode of their worship might have been, it is now grossly entangled with ceremony and emblem. The most considerable branch of these sectaries is denominated Pooje; who have bestowed on the object of their adoration, the title Pauruss Naut, which in the Sanscrit may be termed the lord of the alchymical philosopher's stone.

† Marhatta chiefs of eminence.

LETTER III.

Benares, 30th November, 1782.

MY DEAR SIR,

ON the 3d of this month, I made an excursion to Bidgi-ghur,* a place rendered famous in the Bengal annals, from a large amount of plunder acquired there by the English troops. On the first day, I arrived at Lutteef-ghur, about 18 miles to the south-west of Benares. The fort was entirely deserted, and the passage approaching to it is almost choaked up by brushwood, and the projected branches of trees. Lutteef-ghur stands in the centre of a circular range of hills, from the summit of which, a thick, and in most places, a high wood, reaches to the walls of the fort. The air of this spot being deprived of a quick circulation, has acquired a malignant quality, and communicates its pernicious influence to all animal bodies. It is in these situations, where, as it is termed, the hill fever is produced: — a disease, which pervading every part of the animal œconomy, contaminates the whole mass of blood, and will only yield to the power of mercury. The water also in such places partakes of the like baneful property: — it should seem that the air infuses into this element, a certain portion of that pestiferous quality, with which the climate of woody and confined countries in India is ever pregnant. The falling of the branches and leaves into rivulets and reservoirs of water, may likewise increase the noxious effect. Having frequently witnessed the ill effects of a confined air, I am the more emboldened to hazard these conjectures; which I will close with noticing to you, that wherever I have observed an impurity of air, the water has been equally pernicious.

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* Bidgi and Idgi, according to the Mythology of the Hindoos, keep watch at the gate of Paradise; Ghur, in the Hindoo, is a fortress or strong hold.

At the gate of the fort, had taken up his lonely residence, a Mahometan Faquir, who bore on him, poor man!, evident proofs of the destructive climate of Lutteef-ghur; — he was meagre, wan, and nearly consumed by the violence of a fever and ague. When I desired him to leave so melancholy a station, and go where he might recover his health, he shewed little attention to the advice, and preferred, he said, an existence in this place, under a load of misery and the precarious charity of passengers, to the risk of starving in places where he might be wholly unknown.

On the 4th, after a journey of about twenty miles, I arrived near the foot of Bidgi-ghur hill, where I slept, and in the morning walked up to the fort, which is a circumvallation of the crown of a rocky hill, measuring from the immediate base to the summit, a little more perhaps than two miles.

The artificial fortification is neither strong, nor is it composed of substantial materials, as is seen by a fissure of the wall, caused by the rains of the last year, and also by a breach that was made during the siege; which shew that the wall is chiefly composed of rough stones cemented with clay. This strong hold owes its importance solely to its height and steepness; and had it been defended with a common share of conduct and spirit, the capture would have been attended with much difficulty and bloodshed. It has been said indeed, that exclusively of the hazardous attempt of taking Bidgi-ghur by storm, the greater part of the troops would have been destroyed by fevers, had they remained in that quarter a month longer. Three deep reservoirs, excavated on the top of the hill, plentifully supply the garrison with water. Some of the bastions on the eastern side are supported by branches of the rock, which projecting horizontally eight or ten feet from the summit, holds out in the air a solid foundation. The prospect around is diversified and picturesque; but when you throw the eye on the deep and rugged precipice beneath, the view is infinitely grand, though not divested of that horror, which naturally affects the mind in contemplating objects from so abrupt a height. The rising and setting sun at Bidgi-ghur exhibits a magnificent scene, and excites a train of ideas strongly impressed with a grateful admiration of the first Cause of nature. The view of the setting sun takes in the river Soane, which is seen winding its stream, brightened by the rays of the western light, through a long tract of diversified country. A fort also appears on the side of a distant hill, which is only brought into the evening prospect.

THE village of Mow, situate at the bottom of the descent, which before the capture of Bidgi-ghur was well peopled, and possessed a considerable commerce, is now deserted and in ruins. This village, whose loss is severely felt in many parts of the country, afforded the only mart on that quarter for supplying the wants of the bordering mountaineers, who resorted thither, and bartered their wares for the produce of the low lands. Since the depopulation of

Mow, this commercial communication has ceased, and the Benares traders maintain little connection with the inhabitants of the hills, who are a hardy active race of men, and were they encouraged like those of Bauglepore to enter into our service, an useful body of soldiers might be acquired. They are not, it is said, subject to that species of fever incident to a hilly country, which has operated so fatally on the health of our troops; nor do they entertain those prejudices in their mode of living which affect the higher ranks of the Hindoos, and which have been found to embarrass military operations. An introduction also of a foreign class of men into the army, might be conducive, by its counterpoise, to the insuring the fidelity of the whole body of native troops.

Bulwant Sing, through a channel of intrigue and direct dishonesty, qualities he notoriously possessed, seized on Bidgi-ghur, which he strengthened and made the principal repository of his wealth; and Cheyt Sing,* who augmented the works and increased the treasures, constructed a strong bridge of stone over a small river that skirts the bottom of the hill.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours, &c. &c.

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* The Son of Bulwant Sing, and now a fugitive in the Camp of Scindia.

LETTER IV.

To T. D. F. *Allahabad, 17th Dec. 1782.*

MY DEAR SIR,

THE want of a subject to inform or amuse you, was the only cause of my not sooner acknowledging your long and very kind letter. You may with confidence believe, that a forgetfulness of the many offices of friendship which I have experienced at your hands, will never be classed in the roll of my offences, which, God knows, already is too long a one! and trust me when I say, that I hold the connection which has so long subsisted between us, as the chiefest honour and credit of my life.

I AM now to inform you, that having resolved on proceeding to Europe by a northern tract, I assumed the name of a Georgian, for the sake of travelling with more safety, and left Benares on the 12th of this month, mounted upon a small horse. After a journey of four days, or forty cosses, in which no particular occurrence fell out, I arrived at Allahabad. About mid-way commences the territory of Oude, which is immediately distinguished from that of Benares by its barren and desolate aspect. The fortress of Allahabad, founded by Acbar,* stands on the point of land which forms the confluence of the Ganges and Jumma;—a situation beautiful as it is commodious; and in the season of the year when the flow of water is spacious and rapid, exhibits a scene of uncommon grandeur. On one side, the Ganges is seen rolling down a strong and yellow tide, and on the other, the Jumma glides with a clearer stream close to the walls of the fort. To this favourite and sacred spot a large assembly of Hindoos resort at an annual period, to wash away their sins, and obtain permission to begin a new score. These pilgrims, who are laid under contributions for participating this indulgence, furnish the yearly sum of about 50,000 rupees to the Vizier's treasury. The fort of Allahabad, which is built of stone, occupies a large space of ground, and has been amply supplied with superb and useful buildings, whether for promoting the pleasures or conveniences of life. The place intitled the Ghah Padshil† is one of the best Mahometan mansions I have hitherto seen; but the want of suitable tenants has occasioned great disorders in it. The inside of its upper room is constructed of marble of variegated colours, and neatly adjusted. From this apartment, the lord of the world, as he is intitled by his subjects, hath a distinct view of twelve different suits of female apartments; in the front of which, when the monarch issues the mandate, his beauteous handmaids are arranged in his sight, that he may select the favourite of the day. The imperial choice, or rather edict, (to what humiliations do the laws of Mahomet subject ye, my fair friends!) is conveyed to the fortunate damsel, and full joyously doth her heart beat, who on the day of review attracts the fancy of her lord;—for the passion of vanity is said oftentimes to supply in a female breast the place of love. I should not dislike, my friend, to be a Padshah myself, were it not that many of them have had their throats cut by their friends, and been compelled to drink very bitter potions; since liable to such treatment, much good may their fine ladies and other fine things do them!

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* This Emperor commenced his reign in A. D. 1556, and died in 1605.

† The Imperial Apartment.

In the palace yard stands a round pillar of about forty feet high, consisting of an entire stone, which coarsely resembles the porphyry, and seems covered with an inscription, in the ancient Hindoo character; but the letters are so much effaced and impaired by the ravages of time, which, my friend, spares not even marble, that they are become illegible. The erection of this monument is attributed to Beemshyne, who, your Bramin will tell you, was in his day a powerful chief, and one of the principal warriors in the Mhah Bhaut.* But as a devout believer, you must not repose too much faith on the Bramin's account of the æra in which this Beemshyne is said to have flourished; for he will tell you that our great progenitor was not even heard of in those days. The Mahometans, who as furiously destroyed every monument and curious vestige not expressive of their doctrine, as they were actuated by a blind zeal in its propagation and support, have endeavoured to claim the construction of this pillar, and over the Hindoo record, they have engraved the names of many of their emperors, since the time of Babr†.

This pillar, which bears the mark of great antiquity, clearly evinces that Allahabad was a place of importance long before the æra of the Mahometan conquest of India. We should pass indeed a contemptuous, not to say an unjust censure, on the understanding of the ancient

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* The great war which was carried on by the Paunch-paun-Deve, or the compact of the five Brothers, against Dur-jodin. See Wilkins's Gheeta.

† The first Emperor of the race of Timur, who sat on the throne of Hindostan.

Hindoos, did we suppose that they had overlooked a situation, at once so favourable to the performance of their religious duties, and so happily adapted to the enjoyments of life. Almost as many cities have been brought forward by modern writers to prefer their claims to the Polybortha of India, as of old, contested for the birth-place of Homer. Monsieur d'Anville, the celebrated French geographer, seems to give the palm to Allahabad. Strabo has made mention of a grand causeway, leading from Polybortha into the interior parts of the country, and as such structures are durable and conspicuous, it is to be supposed that some remains of this road would have yet been visible; but on a careful examination I could not discover its most distant trace. A mound of earth appears on the western shore of the Ganges, extending about a mile in a line with the river where it approaches the fort, which has been evidently thrown up to prevent the stream in the seasons of the floods, from overflowing or injuring the town.

In touching on the subject of Allahabad, it is necessary to notice the tomb of Sultan Khusro. This mausoleum, about a mile to the eastward of the town, stands in the midst of a spacious garden inclosed with a high wall, and well supplied with a variety of flowers and fruit trees, but from want of culture they look rugged and barren. Being clad in the Mahometan habit, and intimating a desire to offer up my prayers at the royal shrine, I was immediately admitted. The public edifices of the Mahometans being constructed of the worst species of what is termed the Gothic order, they cannot afford much pleasure to the European eye, which is now taught to regard only the more simple and chaste proportions of art*. Yet the tomb of Khusro, though comprising few of the rules of architecture, hath in its appearance something peculiarly pleasing, and diffuses around it an air of melancholy, congenially suited to the purpose of its foundation. The building is nearly square, raised from the ground by a low flight of steps, and has a vaulted roof in the form of a dome, whose outside is covered with tiles of a fine clay, stained with a diversity of colours, on which the reflection of the sun produces a pleasing effect. No fund being established for supporting this monument, it cannot long survive the numerous edifices now scattered in ruins through the environs of Allahabad. Adjoining to the tomb of Khusro, is one of a smaller size, which a mendicant informed me was erected in commemoration of one of the female branches of the imperial family. Some Mahometan priests who live in the garden, keep the inside of the mausoleum decently clean, and the different appurtenances are still in good preservation, particularly the wooden bier in which the body is said to be deposited*. Observing a small curtain spread on the wall, I drew it aside, and must confess to you that I was impressed with a very sensible awe, on discovering the figure of an open hand, engraved on black marble: when I adverted to the nature of the place, and the use to which it had been applied, I at first supposed that this representation denoted the hand, or the power of the Deity; but a farther recollection informed me, that Mahomed, Ali, Fatima†, Hussin, and Hussein, were described by this emblem; and that, in compliance with the law which excludes all works of sculpture and painting from Mahometan worship, it had been covered.

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* This opinion does not presume to include the monuments at Agra, which have deserved the warmest approbation of our celebrated artists.

The Allahabad districts once paid into the royal treasury a revenue of between seventy and eighty lacks of rupees: but such is the impoverished and depopulated state of the Vizier's country, that it is at this day reduced to a fourth of that amount. Shaistah Khan, who was appointed by Aurungzebe to govern the provinces of Bengal and Bahar after the death of Amir Jumlah*, hath left many monuments of his liberality in the vicinity of Allahabad. On an insulated rock in the Jumna, near the city, and at a small distance from the south shore, he built a lofty apartment, which is cooled by the refreshing winds of the river, and commands a distant and wildly diversified view. A Persian inscription which I transcribed, says that Mahomed Shirreef, in the year of the Hegira 1055†, finished this airy seat of pleasure by order of Shaistah Khan.—But from great men and their splendid works, let me descend to more trivial concerns, and to some account of my private adventures.

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* Sultan Khusro, the eldest son of Tehanquir, died A. D. 1622.

† Fatima, the daughter of Mahomed, was married to Ali, and had two sons, Hussin and Hussein.

INDIA, you know, hath ever been famed for affording convenient places of accommodation to the traveller, who, at the distance of eight or ten miles, seldom fails meeting with a public lodging, or a reservoir of water, where he may perform his ablutions, and quench his thirst. As the greater part of the inhabitants of India, from a simplicity of life, and the clement state of their climate, have but few superfluous wants, a slight defence against the sun and rain, a small portion of clothing, with plain food, constitute a large share of their real ones. In

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* The officer employed by Aurungzebe to oppose Sultan Shujah

† A. D. 1645.

Upper India, the œconomy of Karawan Serah*, or, as it is usually called, the Serauce, is conducted by better regulations, and its conveniencies more sensibly felt, than in the southern parts of India. An inclosed area, the interior sides of which contain small apartments, fronting inwards with a principal gate-way, is appropriated, in every village of note, to the use of travellers †. The stationary tenants of the Serauce ‡, many of them women, and some of them very pretty, approach the traveller on his entrance, and in alluring language describe to him the various excellencies of their several lodgings. When the choice is made (which is often perplexing, so many are the inducements thrown out on all sides of him) a bed § is laid out for his repose,—a smoaking pipe is brought, and the utensils cleaned, for preparing his repast. The necessary sum is delivered into the hands generally of a girl, who procures the materials, and dresses his meal in a most expeditious manner. For two domestics and myself, the horse and his keeper, the whole of my daily expenditure amounted to a sum, which as you will not credit, I will not venture to note; and on days when I was inclined to feast, the addition of two or three pence procured a sumptuous fare, with the accompaniment of a sauce, which an alderman over his callipash might sigh for.

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* Karavanserah is a Persee and Arabic compound of *Kar*, signifying business, *ravan* the participle of the verb *rufteen*, to go, move, proceed, &c. and of *serah*, an habitation.—The Tucktravan, a vehicle used by travellers in many parts of Asia, is composed of the words *tuckt*, a seat, or board, and the aforementioned participle. I have ventured to insert these etymologies for the use of those who are not conversant in the Persian language.

† Shere Shah, who drove Humaim from the throne of Delhi, in 1542, is said to have been the first Mahometan who established Karavanserahs in India. This fact, also recorded in Dow's history, is well known amongst the natives.—Shere Shah built the fort of Rhotas, and the mausoleum of Sasseram.

‡ The serauces at this day are usually given in rent.

§ This piece of furniture, of very simple construction, has low feet, with the sides and ends formed of bamboo or common rough wood, and the bottom of laced cords.

Adieu, my dear Sir.
I am yours, &c. &c.

LETTER V.

To I. D. F. *Lucknow, 1st January, 1783.*

MY DEAR SIR,

MY last letter to you, written from Allahabad, contained some description of that place, with a farrago of desultory remarks arising from the moment, and hastily thrown together; but should the perusal have given a little amusement or information, I will contentedly sacrifice any claims to genius or method.—The following gives the detail of my journey from Allahabad to Lucknow, and though containing no matter of any substance, may afford you half an hour's relaxation.

ON the 20th of December,—after attending at the funeral ceremony performed in commemoration of Hussin and Hussein, or rather of the latter, I left Allahabad, and went no farther that day than Beghum* Serauce, a station of three cosses*. I will cursorily embrace this occasion of informing you, that Hussin and Hussein were the sons of Ali, the son-in-law and nephew of the Arabian prophet. During the war which the first Mahomet maintained against the Infidels (so the professor of the new faith denominated those of a different creed), Hussin was poisoned, and Hussein was slain in battle. They consequently became martyrs;—and the tomb of Hussein, which was erected in the vicinity of Bagdat, is held by the Sheahs† in the same degree of veneration, with that of their prophet, by the other Mahometan sectaries.

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* Beghum is the feminine gender of Begh, [illegible] Khanum is that of Khan; both titles of Tartar extraction: the latter has been often adopted by the female branches of the imperial family of Timur.

On the 21st,—eat my breakfast and smoaked my pipe at Tuttypour, or the place of victory. On enquiry why a village so mean and small, had been distinguished by so great a name, I was told, that in former times, some signal victory had been obtained there; but my intelligencer knew nothing of the parties concerned.—In the evening, having this day travelled six cosses, I halted at Alum Chund, the north-west limit of the Allahabad districts. The country had a barren and desolate aspect; the cause of which was ascribed to the rapacity of a former renter. On entering the serauce, I found the hosts with their spouses, busily occupied in the celebration of a marriage. Whether it was owing to the rare occurrence of this species of ceremony (for they are a people as void of restraint or form as any under the sun), or whether previous difficulties had till now obstructed the union, I will not pretend to determine; but the joy and merriment which circulated in their assembly, could not be surpassed. The men were collected in a body, drinking arrack and beating a tom-tom *; and the women, in a separate *coterie*, were chewing betle, and speaking very loud and quick. Though this jubilee had engrossed a great share of their attention, they gave me a good supper, and a comfortable lodging.

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* Two British miles may be given to the average measurement of a coss.

† The Mahometans of the sect of Ali, are so called.

On the 22d,—I arrived at the Kurrah Manick-Pour,—eight cosses and an half. In my way, I halted during the heat of the day at the serauce of Shahzadpour, which, together with the town, is said to have been built by the Shaistah Khan †, mentioned in my last letter. This nobleman, according to Bernier, was highly celebrated for his eloquence, and elegant style of writing, which it is thought contributed to promote the early success of Aurungzebe. The serauce of Shahzadpour, built chiefly of brick and mortar, has spacious and commodious apartments, but, from want of repair, one angle of it has fallen into ruins. It is seriously to be lamented, that edifices founded on principles of such public spirit, or motives equally beneficial to the state, and whose uses are so universally felt, should be suffered to moulder into decay. It would seem, that when the larger serauces were first founded, certain portions of land, or other established funds, were set apart for keeping them in necessary order: but such has been the distracted state of Hindostan for these later periods, and such the oppressions, or perhaps poverty of its rulers, that these grants have either been resumed, or diverted into other channels. In stigmatizing any specific class of men, I believe I have committed an error; for on a more dispassionate view, a large share of censure falls on the people at large. In India, ostentation, self-love, vanity, or whatever term may be best fitted to the passion whose effects I mean to describe, has usurped as powerful a sway over the minds of the people, as in any circle of the globe; and it is exemplified in various shapes, but in none more than in the foundation of public works. On observing once, a Hindoo of some distinction superintending the construction of a place of worship, I asked him why, in a country famed for its charitable benefactions, so many old edifices allotted to the purposes of religion and hospitality were permitted to fall to the ground, which, had they been repaired, large sums of money would have been saved, and many a valuable monument of antiquity rescued from oblivion? He candidly told me, that, were he to expend his whole estate on repairs, the work would still retain the name of its original founder; but by the erection of a new one, it would be transmitted to posterity in his own. By this register of fame, it should seem that the entire credit of constructing a pagoda, pond, or serauce, will be given to him who first raised the fabric, and no account taken of the occasional embellisher of such structures.—This digression hath prevented me from sooner informing you, that to-day I lost my road; instead of simply going to Manickpour, my place of destination, I went to Kurrah Manickpour, where I passed a very unpleasant night. The air was intensely cold, and my servants, who pursued the right road, carried with them my baggage and my purse. The good woman at the serauce, old, though very active, kindly provided a supper at the risk of not being paid, for I had advised her of the miscarriage; but she could procure no succedaneum for a quilt, so that I was kept shiveringly awake the whole night.

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* A small drum.

† He was the maternal uncle of Aurungzebe.

ADJOINING to the village of Kurrah Manickpour, on a hill, are the remains of a considerable fort. Amongst the ruins I observed some mutilated fragments of Hindoo sculpture, of the same style as that seen on a curious monument of ancient date in the neighbourhood of Benares. Festoons of flowers are sculptured on this monument, which for the simple elegancy of the design and taste, as well as the exact nicety of the execution, may, in my opinion, vie with the works of European masters. The Hindoos of this day have a slender knowledge of the rules of proportion, and none of perspective. They are just imitators, and correct workmen; but they possess merely the glimmerings of genius*.

On the 23d,—crossed the Ganges at Gootree, two miles below Kurrah Manickpour, and arrived at Mustaphabad,—a stage of nine cosses. Almas Ali Khan is the manager or renter of a large tract of country lying on the south of the Ganges, which appears in a less desolate state than any other part of the Vizier's dominions which I have seen. From the ruins of Kurrah fort, the Ganges is seen winding beautifully round the bottom of the hill, and on the northern shore, immediately opposite, stands the village of Manickpour. I found my servants at Mustaphabad, to whom I referred the hospitable hostess, who had been obliged to accompany me so far, for payment of the last night's score.

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* This observation is verified at a village opposite the city of Benares, at the gardens of Ramnagur, where Cheyt Sing has erected a large range of costly buildings, in some of which, stone figures are placed, of very awkward dimensions and dull expression.

On the 24th,—at Bareily, a fortified town,—12 cosses. The country from the last station is much covered with jungle*, and where the prospect opened, but little cultivation appeared, except in the districts of Almas, which are but comparatively well conditioned. I have seen only a land of desolation, exhibiting the scattered vestiges of former prosperity.

On the 25th,—at Doolindy,—8 cosses. The principal town of a district, rented by one of the Vizier's favourite Hindoos, who has laid out a large garden at this place, in which are two neat summer-houses.

On the 26th,—at Sascindy,—10 cosses. There is little else to note than the wild appearance of a barren country; the reverse of what I expected to see in the vicinity of a capital city.

On the 27th,—at Lucknow,—8 cosses. I took a lodging in the Assroff serauce; and to prevent as much as possible the risk of discovery, I discharged all my servants, except one, on whom I could place a reasonable confidence.

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* All forest wood in India, is termed *jungle*.

Lucknow is a large and populous city, but wholly inelegant and irregular. The streets are narrow, uneven, and almost choaked up with every species of filth. The Goomty, running on the north side of the town, is navigable for boats of a common size at all seasons of the year, and falls into the Ganges between Benares and Ghazepour. A line of boats, extended across the river, forms a convenient communication with a large suburb. Shujah-ul-Dowlah made Fyzebad, or Oude, the capital of his dominion; but his son, setting aside that, with many other of his father's arrangements, has fixed his residence at Lucknow.

Perceiving that some of my neighbours began to make inquisitive remarks, I went across the water, and procured a retired and commodious apartment in the Hussen Gunge serauce. Having some business to transact at Lucknow, previously to my journey to Europe, I left my servants at the serauce, on pretence of visiting the English camp, the general rendezvous of idle strangers; and went to the city. Being desirous of seeing a gentleman, who I understood was stationed there, I approached the door of an officer's quarter, and desired the servants to acquaint their master, that a Moghul merchant (of whom there are many at Lucknow) requested permission to see him. Though the entreaty was urged in the softest and most persuasive tone within the compass of my speech, they flatly and roughly rejected it, saying that their master was eating his breakfast. Anxious to obtain the wanted information, I tried another door which seemed less closely guarded, but there also my prayer was preferred in vain; and having nothing in my pocket to strengthen the argument, I was obliged to retire; though the day was extremely hot, and the distance to my lodging was at least four miles. This occurrence, however productive of temporary inconvenience, gave me a satisfactory proof of the efficacy of my disguise, and the fluency of my Mahometan language. Many, I dare say, are the unfortunate plaintiffs in our Indian world, who, unable to purchase a passage through the gates of the great, are thrust away by their rude and rapacious domestics.—In returning, I saw another European house, into which, by a fortunate change in the mode of application, I procured admittance: for on informing the door-keeper that my attendance had been required, I was immediately conducted to his master, who received me in the kindest manner, and on many future occasions shewed me marks of his friendship.—During my stay at Lucknow I lodged at the serauce, and though I remained there twenty days, in which time I made many visits to the English gentlemen, no one seemed to regard me with suspicion. My landlady at first expressed a strong desire of knowing the cause of my frequent excursions; but not receiving a satisfactory account, she concluded that I had formed some female intimacy. As this conjecture was favourable to my plan, I encouraged it in the mind of the good woman, who gave herself infinite credit for the discovery.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours, &c. &c.

LETTER VI.

Lucknow, January 16*th*, 1783.

MY DEAR SIR,

BEFORE I leave the territories of Assoff-ud-Dowlah, or, as he is often intitled from the rank he holds, the Vizier of the Empire, I will throw together for your perusal some brief remarks on the Oude government.

THIS country is bounded on the north, by parts of Napaul and Siranagur; on the east, by the English possessions; on the south, by the Jumna; and on the west, generally by the Doab, and the Ganges. The Oude territories, generally flat and fertile, are watered by the Ganges, Jumna, Gograh, Goomty, and Gunduck, exclusive of many rivulets. These rivers flow through most of the principal towns, and intersect a large space of the country; most of them being navigable for boats, in all seasons of the year.—The English armies may be plentifully supplied with provisions and ammunition, in the event of executing any military operation in that quarter. These rivers also present strong barriers against the Marhattah, Seick, or Mog-hul cavalry. The Vizier's provinces, which yield, it is said, at this period, a revenue of about two millions sterling, have greatly decreased in produce since the death of Shujah-ud-Dowlah. It would be presumptuous in me to attempt an explanation of such decrease. It was sufficiently mortifying, to observe the common effects of a destructive administration. The inhabitants say, that the population of the country is diminished, and that the commerce, which in former periods was important and extensive, has fallen to decay. These evils, which have contributed to the ruin of the most powerful states, and are now precipitating the ruin of Oude, can only be eradicated by the strenuous exertions of a just and wise governor: a character devoutly to be wished for in Oude. It appears, that a large portion of the amount now paid by Assoff-ud-Dowlah into the Company's treasury at Lucknow, is transported from thence in specie to relieve the necessities of Bengal, now urgent in the extreme. Much of the wealth also, which has been accumulated by the servants of the Company residing in this country, has been conveyed in a similar mode; and the mischief gathers strength from the tenor of our present connection with Assoff-ud-Dowlah. The channels of commerce operate too tardily for measures which require dispatch, and embrace only the object of the day. If treasure can be procured, no secondary aids are called in; no succedaneum is searched for. These drains, unsupplied by any native source, must soon exhaust the vigour of a country, where, in addition to the grievance, commerce is loaded with monopoly, and influenced by the hand of power. The demand for bills on Bengal, which has been pressing and continued, gave them often a value of seventeen and a half per cent. on the Lucknow amount; a profit which enabled the bankers to export the value in silver*.—The resumption of the Jaguir, or alienated lands, has not been productive of the promised benefits. The officers who enjoyed those benefactions, were many of them men of expensive manners; they promoted the consumption of valuable manufactures, and, possessing rank and distinction, they maintained a numerous body of dependents. Whether from a succession of oppressive managers, or that the inhabitants do not experience the fruits of former liberality, it is evidently seen, that the resumed districts are ill cultivated and thinly inhâbited.

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* A flow of commerce which now more diffusely conveys the manufactures of this country to Bengal, has reduced this premium to four per cent.

LITTLE remains to be said of the Vizier's military establishment; it being only useful in assisting the collection of the revenue, enforcing the obedience of the lesser vassals, or furnishing a guard for his person. The defence of the country wholly rests on the forces of the English, which are supplied according to emergency. The troops at this time, amount to about eight thousand sepoys, and five hundred Europeans, with the requisite train of artillery. The treasury of Assoff-ud-Dowlah is now low, but it is said, that he has nearly paid off the residue of a large debt, which had been accumulating since the period of his father's death. It is to be sincerely wished, that the measures pursued in future, may redress the grievances of this country; which though of such extensive compass, and possessing so valuable a resource, bears the aspect of rapid decay: and though its position, and native weakness, might render the alliance profitable to the English, no solid benefits have hitherto arisen from our connection with Oude.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours. &c. &c.

LETTER VII.

Furruckabad, January 26th, 1783.

My Dear Sir,

I NOW beg to present you with a sketch of my route to Furruckabad, where I purpose resting two or three days with my countrymen, whom I shall not probably see again until my arrival in Europe.

On the 18th at noon, I left my hostess's quarters at Lucknow, and after a warm and dusty ride of seven cosses, halted at the village of Nowill Gunge. The next day I arrived at Meahgunge, a stage also of seven cosses; and was much rejoiced to find that my little steed continued to possess high health and vigour. He is endowed, I fear, with a too great predominance of the latter quality, and that in its worst sense; for if I am to judge from his carnal hankerings, and strong neighings of love to every mare he sees, it would too plainly appear that his life has not been of the chastest kind. But as it is said, and in Holy Writ I believe, " that there is no wisdom under the girdle," meaning, evidently, the girdles of the lords and ladies of the creation, we may surely excuse the wanderings and frailties of a poor horse, whose passions receive no check from constitutional modesty, or virtuous example.

MEAHGUNGE, if I am informed right, was founded by Almas, and seems to be a thriving and populous village. From the various intelligence which I have procured, it is evident that the renter here is active, industrious, and regular. The inhabitants say, that his rigour in collecting the revenue is, in a certain degree, qualified by a steady observance of his contracts. — I passed this evening in the company of a Patan, who was returning to his home from Lucknow, where he had expended the greatest part of his estate in the society of the ladies, and in the pleasures of arrack; but in the last he very copiously indulged. In the course of two hours and a half, I beheld him with amazement empty two bottles of a spirit so harsh and fiery, that the like dose must have turned the head of an elephant. The Patan made an apology for this excessive potation, by observing, that it removed from his mind every sensation of sorrow and melancholy, — passions, which, he said, greatly annoyed him in his cooler moments. This jovial Mahometan was attended by an old musician, marvellously ill apparelled, and deficient in the larger portion of his teeth, who, during the interludes of his master's amusement, strummed on a miserable guitar, which he accompanied with some of Hafcz's odes; but uttered in a voice that would have struck dismay into the fiercest beast that ranges the forest. — At this gunge, a servant whom I hired at Lucknow, and my only attendant, carried off, in the night, my matchlock and a curious dagger.

On the 20th, at Banghur Mow, — 10 cosses, — a large village in the district of Almas. — Here the Patan having drunk out all the substance of his purse, sold a piece of family tin-plate; the produce of which raised the sum of three rupees. He took that evening an extraordinary draught of his favourite spirit; and, that his pleasures might have no alloy, he called in a good-natured girl, who for one half-rupee displayed to the Patan a more ample fund of dalliance and allurement, than could be purchased by us for twenty at Lucknow. — He expressed a sovereign contempt for Almas*, who he said being precluded from the pleasures of the sex, disliked and discouraged them. Many of Almas's wounded sepoys were brought into the serauce from a fort in the woods, which had been reduced by him after a siege of six weeks. These men were shockingly mangled. — Some had balls lodged in their bodies, others were scorched by a combustible matter thrown on them during the attack.—Being possessed of a few medical materials, I applied dressings to such cases as could likely receive any benefit fron the assistance; and I was pleased to observe the successful effects of some of the applications. The want of chirurgical help is an evil which affects, in a grievous manner, the native military service of Hindostan, especially since the use of fire-arms has become so prevalent; and it will be no exaggeration to say, that a greater number of the country troops are destroyed by the effects of wounds, than slain in immediate action.

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* He is a eunuch.

After a long journey of 14 cosses, in which I crossed the Ganges, and had nearly exhausted the strength of my horse, I arrived on the 21st, at the ancient city of Kinnouge, situate on the Callinaudy, a small river that falls into the Ganges, about twenty miles below Furruckabad. Kinnouge, before the period of the Mahometan conquest, ranked amongst the most populous and opulent cities of Hindostan. It is mentioned in testimony of its grandeur, that Kinnouge contained thirty thousand shops for the sale of betle, and afforded employment for six thousand female dancers and musicians. — A vast mass of ruins interspersed through a wide space, marks the ancient extent and grandeur of Kinnouge; though few distinct vestiges now exist, except some parts of a stone temple erected in ancient times to the honour of Setah, the wife of Ram, which has been exorcised by some zealous Mahometan, and converted into a place of worship. The present race of Indian Mahometans not being fervent in the cause of religion, or being, rather, supinely regardless of it, (many of them holding the memory of Mahomet in as little reverence as they would that of Thomas-à-Becket, had they ever heard of him,) the mosque is now defiled and abandoned. In several cavities which the rain has formed, I observed parts of brick wall, sunk twenty feet at least beneath the level of the town; and the inhabitants say, that in digging into the foundation, small pieces of gold and silver are often discovered. They also say, that Kinnouge was once destroyed by an inundation; but as few Hindoo records are divested of mythological story, slender uses only can be derived from them. The Marhattas plundered this city, and laid waste the adjacent country, previous to the battle of Panifrett*. After this important event, which gave a strength and permanency to the Mahometan power in Upper India, Ahmed Khan Bungish, the chief of Furruckabad, took possession of the districts of Kinnouge, which, during his administration, began to emerge from the ruin in which it had been long involved, and assumed symptoms of a recovery which are now wholly effaced.

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* It was fought in February 1761.

ARRIVED on the 23d, at Khodah Gunge,—nine cosses,—a village in the territory of Muzzuffer Jung, the adopted son of Ahmed Khan; but no more like the father,—excuse the phrase,—than "I am like Hercules."—This young man, averse to, or incapable of business, is a tributary of Assoff-ud-Dowlah, who by the high fine he has imposed on Furruckabad, may be said to govern it himself.

ON the 24th,—at Furruckabad—nine cosses. Finding the pleasures of my Patan friend grow expensive, and very noisy, I took an easy leave of him, and slipped unperceived into the English artillery camp, where I am treated, as I have been in all parts of this hospitable country, with every mark of kindness.

I am, my Dear Sir,

Yours, &c. &c.

LETTER VIII.

Rampore, February 5th, 1783.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE desire on every occasion of testifying the sense I entertain of your friendship, prompts me to give you the relation of my route from Furruckabad to Rampore.

THE progress of the first day, the 29th of January, 1783, which was a long one,—not less than eighteen cosses,—brought me and my horse, both greatly jaded, to Kytterah; a large village on the west side of the Ganges.

THE next day at Allahapour,—nine cosses.—This place not being a common stage, nor containing a serauce, my accommodations were slender, and those extorted by the force of bold language, and a few extra pence. At Allahapour there is only one house of entertainment, and that for the article of eating only;—you may sleep where you can. After supper, I proposed to the landlady with every token of decorum, that we should lodge that night under the same roof. The dame misconstruing the purpose of my request, and fired with indignation at the idea of its indecency, poured on me a torrent of reproach. In the exercise of the tongue, a female of Hindostan hath few equals; and if she hath ever followed a camp, I would pronounce her invincible on any ground in Europe. An English woman, educated at our most noted seminaries, and skilled in all the various compass of debate, will, perhaps, on some interesting occasion, maintain the contest for an hour, which then terminates in blows and victory. But an Indian dame, improved by a few campaigns, has been known to wage a colloquial war, without introducing one manual effort, for the space of three successive days; sleeping and eating at reasonable intervals[*]. There is a fertility of imagination, a power of expression, inherent in the mind, and vocal ability, of an Asiatic, particularly a female one, which cannot be engendered in the cold head of an European: and there is an extent of language also peculiar to the East, which the limits of Western speech do not contain.—Let me not forget the story of my landlady, whose words, shrill and piercing, yet seem to vibrate in my ear.—With every symptom of a virulent female pride, and the semblance of outrageous virtue, she declared that I should not sleep under her roof,—I might, if I liked, place my bed on the out side of the door.—Finding the night growing cold, and not being impressed with sentiments of respect for mine hostess, whose person had nothing lovely in it, I planted my bed somewhat rudely in the midst of her apartment, telling her, she might dispose of herself as she deemed most fitting, but that my deportment would be chaste, and consistent with the rules of honour, though appearances might be unfavourable. The good woman perceiving my inattention to her clamorous representation, was glad to compound the matter, and take a small pecuniary compensation, for the injury her character might suffer.

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[*] Such prolonged engagements are distinguished by the particular term of "*baussy Lerhay*," or the stale war.

On the next day I went to Badam, a station of eight cosses.—Badam is said to have been founded four hundred years ago, by one of the Seljukian kings; and from a magnificent extensive city, is now sunk into a small mouldering town. The ruins of the fort still serve to exhibit a mortifying picture of former grandeur; but such is the reverse of its condition, that the howling wolf, and the screeching owl, now become its only tenants, have supplanted the gay damsel, and the care-soothing minstrel. Then, my friend, ere thy youthful blood ceases to run lightly through its now elastic channels,—ere thy mind refuses longer to receive the glowing tints of fancy's pencil, —seize the fair pleasures of the hour, and, following the precepts of our Hafez, leave the rest to fate!—I passed this evening in the company of the fair, (though the epithet may not literally apply to our Indian ladies,) who, for a moderate offering, sung, laughed, and danced around me until mid-night.

On the 1st of February, after a tedious journey of fourteen cosses, leading through a lonely unhospitable country, I arrived at Owlah.—Of the few fellow-travellers pursuing the same track, two wolves, a fox, and two hares, composed the greater number. The shrubs and high grass had so concealed the path, that I was completely bewildered, and had lost my way; when a small village on an eminence attracted my notice, and held out the prospect of relief: but such is the instability of sublunary pleasure, that this promising mark proved a false beacon. The hamlet was unroofed, and its inhabitants had sought a more friendly land. Then, in the bitterness of my heart, I gave up Shujah-ud-Dowlah to as many devils as chose to take him, and was about consigning the English to the same crew, for having expelled from a country which they had made populous and opulent, the extensive tribe of Rohillas. How insatiable, cruel, and how destructive, even of its own purposes, appears ambition, when placed in this light. It prompted a prince, already possessed of an ample fair territory, to seize, with barely the colour of pretence, the domain of his neighbours, who, by a salutary system of government, had enriched their country, and had made their names respected. The conqueror, by the fortune of war, subjects into a province this flourishing territory, which is soon converted into desolate plains, and deserted villages. This is not, I trust, the language of exaggeration, or the colouring of fancy: it is a simple, grievous truth, forcing itself on the notice of the most cursory observer.—The town of Owlah, once crowded with inhabitants, and adorned with mosques and spacious buildings, is now verging to ruin, and many of its streets are choaked up with fallen habitations.

On the 2d of February, at Shahabad,—fourteen cosses,—a large village in the districts of Fyze-ullah-Khan. The whole of this chief's country evinces the beneficial effects arising from the encouragement of husbandry, and the aid of an active government. Populous villages, skirted by extensive fields of corn, are seen on all sides; and the haughty independent spirit which invariably pervades every class of the people, mark their abhorrence of despotism. Many of the Rohillas, who had been driven from the country after the death of Hafiz Rhamut, have settled in this quarter.

On the 3d, at Rampour,—fourteen cosses. Fyze-ullah-Khan, resides in this town, which the general resort of his civil and military officers, has now made populous, and wealthy.

I am, Dear Sir,
Yours, &c. &c.

[The following history of the Rohillas, and Shujah-ud-Dowlah, compiled since the date of the letters, is founded on sundry original documents, and various local information, obtained during my residence in the northern parts of India, and has been introduced in this place, though interrupting the series of the letters, to bring into one view, a body of relative facts.]

HISTORY OF THE ROHILLAS[*].

IT appears, that about the year 1720, Bisharut Khan, and Daoud Khan, of the tribe of Rohillas, accompanied by a small number of their needy and adventurous countrymen, came into Hindostan in quest of military service. They were first entertained by a Madar Saha, the Hindoo chief of Scrouly[†], who, by robbery and predatory excursions, maintained a large party of banditti. In the plunder of an adjacent village, Daoud Khan captured a youth of the Jatt sect[‡], whom he adopted and brought up in the Mahometan faith, by the name of Ali Mahomet; and though he had children born to him in marriage, Daoud Khan distinguished this boy by pre-eminent marks of parental affection. Madar Saha assigned to the body of Rohillas, which soon increased, certain lands* for their maintenance. Goolareah and some other villages, were given to Bisharut Khan; and Daoud Khan obtained Burneah and Beouly †.

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[*] This appellation, I have been informed, is derived from *Rob*, a word in the Afghan language signifying a hill or mountain; and is the name also of a certain tract of territory, the native country of the Rohillas, situated between Peshour and Cabul.

[†] A small town in the north-west quarter of Rohilcund.

[‡] This sect, a numerous and powerful one in the northern parts of India, is classed in the fourth, or Sooder, tribe of the Hindoos.

WHILST the Rohillas were yet in this limited state, Shah Alum Khan, an Afghan Mollah ‡, visited his countrymen in India; and it is said that he had particular claims of friendship on Daoud Khan, being either the adoptive father of that chief, or having afforded him in his youth the means of subsistence. In whatever relation the Mollah stood to Daoud Khan, it is allowed that he was hospitably treated at Beouly; and on returning to Afghanistan, was furnished with a sum of money for defraying the expences of his journey. Shah Alum came a second time to

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* The Rohilla officers who stood next in authority to those chiefs, were Caim Khan, Shadie Khan, Permaul Khan, Sultan Khan, and Azum Khan Dhunghiah.

† Villages situated in the districts of Sullausee, a division of Rohilcund, which lies 40 computed miles to the westward of Bareily.—See Rennel's map.

‡ Mollah is an appellation given to those who are skilled in the religious doctrine and laws of Mahomet.

Kuthair*, where he again experienced the generosity of Daoud Khán; but on going back to his country, he was killed, and his effects were plundered. It has been said, that this assassination was committed at the instigation of Daoud Khan, in revenge of some haughty expressions of the Mollah to that chief. I have been wholly prompted to make this mention of Alum Khan, from his being the father of Hafiz Rhamut, who in latter times became so conspicuous and unfortunate.

The Rohillas, quarrelling with Madar Saha, retired from his country, and associating themselves with Chand Khan, the chief of Bareily†, they jointly entered into the service of Azmuth Khan, the Governor of Moradabad ‡. They did not long remain attached to this officer, but moving towards the northern mountains, they made incursions into the territory of the Rajah of Cummaioun §. Chand Khan had previously refused to proceed on this expedition with the Rohillas, who, after various success, were wholly worsted. The Rohillas had penetrated into the interior country, but being surrounded on all sides by the mountaineers, who cut off their supply of provision, they were compelled to submit to disgraceful terms of releasement. The persons of Daoud Khan, and Ali Mahomet, were delivered to the Rajah, who put the former to death; and the like fate would have awaited the son, had he not made his escape. The Rohillas say, that Daoud Khan was not surrendered to the chief of Cummaioun, but slain by a party of mountaineers, who had attacked him by surprise. The Rohilla party after this disaster withdrew to Beouly and Burneah, where they had, antecedently to the Cummaioun expedition, lodged their families; and in a short space of time it is seen, that they seized on the districts of Madar Saha, their first master, who fell in one of the desultory actions that followed this invasion. Ali Mahomet, after the death of Daoud Khan, had been declared chief * of the party; nor did he,

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* The original name of a part of Rohulcund, previously to the period of the Rohilla conquest, and still adopted in the public registers of the country.

† Bareily, a spacious well built town, in the centre of Rohilcund. —See Rennel's map.

‡ A town formerly of great note, situate in the northern part of Rohilcund.—See Rennel's map.

§ A spacious tract of mountainous country, subject to a Hindoo Chief; and forming the north-east boundary of Rohilcund.

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* Mahomet Khan, the son of Daoud Khan, either from being superseded in his father's affection by Ali Mahomet, or at the period of Daoud Khan's death, being excluded by the Rohilla officers from the succession, retired to Furruckabad, where he was received into the Bunglish family. It is mentioned also in a manuscript

though then a youth, seem unworthy of the charge. He was brave, enterprising, and never failed to improve the occasions of advancing his power and enlarging his territory.—An eunuch who resided at Munounah*, and managed the affairs of those omrahs of the court who held granted lands in Kuthair, had incited Ali Mahomet, from some motive of resentment, to invade the possessions of the chief of Owlah; which were soon reduced by the Rohillas, and ultimately annexed to their territory. Ali Mahomet found, which he had sought for, a pretext to quarrel with the eunuch, whom he engaged†, and slew in a pitched battle; the success of which, invested him with the estates of the nobles, and a large booty. Ali Mahomet, chiefly by the assistance of the Vizier Kummer-ud-Dein, not only made his peace at court, but obtained a commission for collecting the revenue of the pension lands, which it is said he punctually remitted‡.

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which I have seen, that at the time of his faher's death, Mahomet Khan was an infant, and that he remained some years in the family of Ali Mahomet.

* A town in Rohilcund.

† The battle in which the eunuch was slain, happened in 1727.

‡ An act of such avowed rebellion, committed within almost the precincts of the court, marks an epocha of the decline of the Mogul Empire, and conspicuously shews, that the power and vigour which had rendered its arms invincible under Acbar and Aurungzebe, no longer existed.

From this period, may be dated the first important establishment of the Rohilla power in Rohilcund: a name by which they distinguished the Kuthair districts, and their other territories on the east side of the Ganges. Azmut Ulla Khan * being removed from the government of Moradabad, Hunund, an Hindoo officer of note, was ordered to proceed to that place, and exterminate the government of the Rohillas. It appears, that Omdut Ul Mulck †, a powerful omrah at the court of Mahomet Shah, advised and promoted this measure, in revenge of the death of the eunuch, who had been his agent in the management of an extensive Jaguir, which he held in the districts of Munounah and Owlah. The forces of Hunund were encountered by the Rohillas under the command of Ali Mahomet ‡, and wholly defeated. Hunund, together with his son, fell in battle; and the districts of Moradabad, with those of Bareily, were seized on by Ali Mahomet.—About this time Azim Khan Dungheah, a Rohilla who had been employed in the service of the zemindar of Peleabeat §, joined

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* In some papers recording Rohilla history, it is mentioned, that Azmut Ullah was forcibly deprived of his government by Ali Mahomet.

† This officer was also known by the name of Amir Khan.

‡ This event happened A. D. 1740, the year after Nadir Shah's invasion of India.

§ A town in the north-east quarter of Rohilcund, near the foot of a woody range of hills.—Vide Rennel's map.

Ali Mahòmet; whom it is said he urged to invade the possessions of his late master. The Rohilla, who embraced with eagerness every opportunity of extending his conquests, and acquiring plunder, attacked the Hindoo, and drove him from his residence. After the death of Hunund, it is mentioned, though without any accurate detail of facts, and a total omission of date, that Meer Munnoo, the son of the Vizier Kummer-ud-Dein, was sent into Rohilcund with an army to compel Ali Mahomet to account for the Rohilcund revenue, and to restore the artillery which had been attached to the troops of Hunund. Ali Mahomet met Meer Munnoo at a passage of the Ganges near Daranaghur*, where an adjustment was effected; and the daughter of the Rohilla, it is also said, given to Meer Munnoo's brother in marriage. No other dates are affixed to the arrival of Hafiz Rhamut Khan † in India, than that he joined his countrymen during the administration of Ali Mahomet; who being desirous of effacing any resentment that he might harbour for the murder of Alum Khan, quickly advanced this chief to an important station. Dhoondy Khan, a nephew of Alum Khan, who probably came to Rohilcund about the same period, was also much favoured by Ali Mahomet. Actuated more perhaps by the desire of conquest, than retaliating former disgrace, Ali Mahomet invaded Cummaioun, which he over-run, and compelled the chief to take refuge in the Serinagur country*. He amassed a large booty in this expedition, which was concluded by the exaction of an annual tribute; and Rohilla troops were stationed in the forts of Cashipour and Rooderpour, dependencies of Cummaioun, which he kept possession of, to record, it is said, the revenge that had been taken for the murder of his father.

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* A town on the bank of the Ganges, in the north-west quarter of Rohilcund.—See Rennel's map.

† Hafiz Rhamut, some documents say, first came into India in the character of a merchant.

Ali Mahomet, who resided chiefly at Owlah, established throughout his territory a permanent system of government, which though occasionally rigorous, afforded a general protection to the lower class of people. Surdar Khan, who had approved himself in many actions a brave soldier, was appointed to the command of the army; and certain lands were granted him for his maintenance. Futtah Khan †, with a comfortable donation, was created the public treasurer, and keeper of the household stores. Peleabeat and Bareily were given to Hafiz Rhamut; and Moradabad, to Dhoondy Khan. Ali Mahomet seems to have held the imperial authority at this period in a low degree of estimation, for he openly seized on some valuable commodities, which the Governor of Bengal had dispatched, by the road of Rohilcund, to court, for the use of the king. Setting also at defiance the power of Sufdah Jung, the Subahdar of Oude, he plundered a large quantity of valuable timber that had been cut down for his use in the northern parts of Rohilcund. Sufdar Jung, who had ever been inimical to the late conquerors of Kuthair, acquired a sufficient influence over Mahomet Shah[*], to induce that Prince to attack Ali Mahomet. The Rohillas were secretly supported by the Vizier Kummer-ud-Dein, who, bore an inveterate hatred to the Subahdar of Oude; and who, in the usage of the courtiers of that day, strengthened his party by every powerful connection that he could procure.

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* An Hindoo territory, bounding Rohilcund on the north.

† Futtah Khan, originally a Hindoo, was adopted by Ali Mahomet. The usage of male adoption prevails even in Mahometan families where there are many sons.

The King entered Rohilcund with a great

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[*] Sufdar Jung chiefly persuaded Mahomet Shah to undertake this expedition, by a stipulation of paying one lack of rupees for every marching, and half a lack for every halting day, of the Imperial army, until its arrival in Rohilcund.

force*, and without coming to an engagement, possessed himself of the open country. Ali Mahomet, aware of his inability to resist the king's army, and feeling perhaps a reluctance to face his sovereign in the field, had retired into the woods of Banghur †, the skirts of which were defended by a chain of forts that had been erected by the Rohillas at a former period. Ali Mahomet maintained this post for some time, but having no hope of relief, and being scantily supplied with provisions, he surrendered himself into the hands of the king; and at the intercession of Kummer-ud-Dein, was pardoned.

The power of the Rohillas was now annihilated in Rohilcund, and all their officers and principal people were removed to Delhi. This remarkable event, which happened in the year 1745, shews that Ali Mahomet must have been essentially aided by the distracted state of the empire, during the Persian invasion, in the increase and establishment of his dominion. It appears that he remained about [redacted] year at Delhi, under the immediate protection of the Vizier, when, at that nobleman's recommendation, he was appointed the military governor of Sirhend, and ordered to reduce the former chief of that place, who had thrown off his allegiance to the empire. Previously to his proceeding on this service, Ali Mahomet had been required to send Abed-ullah and Fyze-ullah, two of his sons, to Labore*, to be kept as hostages for the good conduct of the father. The Rohilla, who on every occasion displayed the ability and spirit of a soldier, defeated the Sirhend rebel, and reduced to his subjection Kote Roy, one of the strongest fortresses in the upper part of India. During the residence of Ali Mahomet at Sirhend, his party, which had been joined by a body of two or three thousand marauding Afghans, was computed at ten thousand cavalry, and fifteen or twenty thousand infantry of various denominations. The Rohilla did not take any part in the Durany war †; but whilst the Moghul and Afghan armies were approaching to action, he quitted the Punjab and retired to Hurdwar, from whence he penetrated, in 1747, into Rohilcund, which he rapidly conquered.

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* During the campaign of Mahomet Shah in Rohilcund, he gave to the Shote river the name of Yaa Wuffadar, or faithful friend, from the great conveniences derived by his army from this stream, whose waters are salubrious, and flow in a beautifully winding course.

† These woods lie between Owlah and Rampore.—Vide Rennel's map.

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* Meer Munoo, the [redacted] of the Vizier, [redacted] at that time the Governor of Labore.

† The first invasion of the Durany Ahmed Shah:

The two sons of Ali Mahomet, who had been delivered as hostages for his good conduct, were taken by Ahmed Shah, the Durany, in the fort of Sirhend; where they had been placed by Kummer-ud-Dein, previously to the reduction of that town by the Afghans. Ali Mahomet could not long have enjoyed the fruits of his last success; for his death, according to the memoirs of that time, happened in the latter end of 1747 *, at Owlah.

PERHAPS no soldier that has appeared in India, passed through more active and eventful scenes of life, than Ali Mahomet. He was born, and grew up, it may be said, amidst the din of arms. He fell, when a boy, into the hands of Daoud Khan. An incessant series of warfare occupied his manhood, and he died at the period of finally subduing the territory, which he had before arduously fought for, conquered, and had lost.—This chief bore the reputation of a liberal encourager of agriculture and commerce. He was strict and rigorous in the exactions which he levied from his subjects; but as he rarely infringed, he never remitted a stipulated engagement. Owlah, his usual place of residence, and the principal town of Rohilcund, he ornamented with numerous public and private

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* Or the beginning of 1748.

edifices, which were constructed and arranged with an order and taste seldom seen in Indian cities.

Saud Ullah Khan, the third son * of Ali Mahomet, succeeded to the supremacy of the Rohilla dominion. In obedience to the last counsel of his father, who had recommended Hafiz Rhamut to his young successor †, as the most capable of the Rohillas, Saud Ullah appointed that officer his deputy in the management of public affairs. During the administration of Saud Ullah, the Patans of Furruckabad, commanded by their chief, Caim Khan Bungbish, invaded Rohilcund. Confident of success, and presuming on the military reputation which he had acquired, the Patan precipitately quitted the body of his army, and advanced with a party of his principal officers. A detachment of Rohillas in ambuscade, fired at Caim Khan as he passed, and killed him, with some other persons of his retinue. The army, on the death of their leader, fled, leaving the baggage and guns behind, which were captured by the Rohillas, and estimated at a great value. Saud Ullah, said at that time to be fourteen years

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* The two elder were yet kept in confinement by the Durannies.

† At his father's death, Saud Ullah was about twelve years of age.

of age, had accompanied the army on this expedition*. Sufdar Jung still retaining a strong animosity to the Rohillas, and desirous of improving the occasion of Saud Ullah's minority, formed a junction with Mulhar Row, the chief of a large body of Marhatta cavalry, and penetrated into Rohilcund. The Rohillas, unable to resist so large a force, took shelter in the skirts of the northern mountains, where they remained, until some revolutions at court caused Sufdar Jung to move towards Delhi. He carried with him the strength of his own, and the auxiliary army†, stationing in Rohilcund, a detachment for the purpose of maintaining possessions of the districts he had conquered: the Rohillas did not long continue in concealment, but collecting their scattered forces, they expelled the remaining troops of Sufdar Jung.

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* The invasion of Caim Khan happened in the latter end of 1749. It appears that Mahomet Khan, the son of Daoud Khan, who had taken refuge at Furruckabad, accompanied Caim Khan on the expedition, and fell in the action. In the course of the same year, an officer named Kuttib-ud-Dein, the son or grand-son of Azmut Ullah Khan, was appointed by the court to the government of Moradabad, and entered Rohilcund with an army which was encountered and defeated by the Rohillas.

† It is mentioned, that the Marhattas withdrew from Rohilcund, on receiving a bond of fifty lacks of rupees from the Rohillas; and it should seem, that they made the non-payment of this bond an ostensible cause for invading Rohilcund, in the years 1772 and 1773.

It appears that about the year 1750, the two elder sons of Ali Mahomet, having been enlarged by Admed Shah Dourany, came into Rohilcund, and solicited a portion of the paternal estate. Their claims were submitted to the deliberation of the principal Rohilla officers, among whom Hafiz took the lead, and it was resolved that the territory which had been personally possessed by Ali Mahomet, should be divided amongst his sons *. Violent disputes soon arose amongst the brothers, in the detail of which, little accuracy is observed by the writers of the tracts that have come into my possession: nor would the relation, consisting of perplexed scenes of treachery and intrigue, tend to forward the general plan of this treatise. It will be sufficient to say, that the Rohilla chiefs, aware of the difficulties that affected the late arrangement, and dissatisfied at the conduct of Abed Ullah Khan, the eldest of the brothers, united in force, and expelled him, with some other branches of the family, from Rohilcund. Fyze-Ullah Khan, the second son of Ali Mahomet, obtained, after the expulsion of Abed Ullah, the districts of Rampour; which his prudent, wary

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* Ali Mahomet had six sons, Abed Ullah Khan, Fyze-Ullah Khan, Saud Ullah, Mahomet Yar Khan, Allah Yar Khan, and Martaza Khan.

conduct has preserved to this day, though he has been involved in a series of domestic feuds, and was once invested and reduced to extreme distress by a powerful army*. The districts which had been allotted to Abed Ullah, for a short time considered the ruling chief, were now bestowed on Saud Ullah Khan: who again rose to his former superiority of station. Hafiz Ahmed, having acquired by his office, military ability, and genius, and his extensive influence in Rohilcund, gradually diminished, and at length wholly superseded, the authority of Saud Ullah, who assenting to the offer of a pension†, Hafiz was avowedly advanced to the supreme administration of affairs. The cause of this revolution is ascribed to the indolent and dissipated genius of Saud Ullah, who, it was represented by the party of Hafiz, would soon waste the resources of the country, and entail a disgrace on the nation. Without searching into remoter motives, it may be directly imputed to the ambition of Hafiz, who no longer held in remembrance the hand that had raised him to honours, and had committed a son to his protection; but rent without a scruple every bond that confined his schemes of grandeur. Hafiz Rhamut had borne a part in the actions of his countrymen in India; he had seen that no limits are affixed to power, and that no duties, prescribed for the guidance of men, impede the strides of ambition. The death of Saud Ullah Khan, which happened in 1761, at Owlah, contributed to fix the power of Hafiz Rhamut, and relieved him from his proportioned payment of the sum, that had been assigned for the maintenance of that chief.

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* The combined army of English and Shujah-ud-Dowlah in 1774.

† It is said that the other chiefs contributed to this payment, which amounted to eight lacks of rupees per annum.

THE want of established facts for describing in regular order the History of the Rohillas, confined me to the use of such materials, as immediately mark their military progress, or lead to the essential changes of their government. In my Rohilla papers it is mentioned, that on Sufdar Jung's death[*], Ghaze-ud-Dein, the Vizier of the Empire[†], joined by Ahmed Khan Bungush[‡], marched an army into Oude, and commenced hostilities against Shujah-ud-Dowlah, who had refused to make any pecuniary acknowledgments to the court on the event of his accession, or render an account of the personal estate of his father[§]. Shujah-ud-Dowlah, aware of his inability to resist this attack alone, solicited the aid of the Rohilla states, who assenting to the request, came into Oude with a large force. The Rohilla chiefs ultimately effected a cessation of hostility between the contending parties; and being chosen to decide on the claims preferred by Ghaze-ud-Dein, it was stipulated that Shudah-ud-Dowlah should appropriate certain districts of the annual value of five lacks of rupees, to the use of the Imperial family. Nor was this engagement acceded to by Ghaze-ud-Dein, until Saud Ullah Khan had agreed to become security for its performance*.—Saud Ullah Khan, in 1760, had accompanied the Rohilla army to the relief of Najeb Khan, one of the Rohilla chiefs, who was invested by a body of Marhattas at Sookertal†; and this appears to be the last public act which Saud Ullah performed.

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[*] He died in the year 1754.

[†] Ahmed Shah then sat on the throne of Delhi.

[‡] The Navaab of Furruckabad.

[§] In Mahometan States, the prince, on the death of a subject, becomes the heir of his property; which is often remitted to the family on the payment of a moderate fine.

THAT you may view more comprehensively the situation of the Rohillas at the period of Saud Ullah's death, it is necessary to lay before you a brief description of those officers, who at that time held possessions in Rohilcund.

DHOONDY Khan, in the partition of lands

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* It was on this occasion, I believe, that Shujah-ud-Dowlah and Saud Ullah made an exchange of their turbans.—This ceremony is observed by the Mahometans in India as a pledge of friendship, and sometimes it is practised in the ratification of treaties.

† The name of a village, and ford of the Ganges.—See Rennell's map.

which were assigned to the chiefs, obtained the districts of the Bissouly, Morababad, Chaundpore and Sumbul[*]. He died previously to the Rohilla war, 1774, leaving three sons, the eldest of whom, Mohubbullah Khan, succeeded to the largest portion of his territory[†]. Mullah Surdah Khan, to whom the districts of Sunejah Kote[‡], and some other adjacent lands had been assigned, left six sons; amongst whom dissensions arising about the division of the inheritance, the two eldest, Ahmed Khan and Mahomet Khan, had recourse to arms, for the decision of the contest. Ahmed Khan, supported by Hafiz Rhamut, defeated his brother in an action, and took him prisoner[§]. Futtah Khan, one of the early associates of Ali Mahomet, who had accumulated much wealth from the office[‖] he had so long filled, held the districts of Bandaum, Aussete, and Hessinpour[*]. This officer, who died before the expulsion of the Rohillas, was succeeded in the territorial property, by his eldest son, Ahmed Khan[†]. The widow of Saud Ullah Khan, held in high estimation for a liberality of disposition and pious deportment, resided in the town of Owlah, which had been, by the consent of the chiefs, committed to her immediate charge. After the death of Saud Ullah, when the common authority of the government had devolved on Hafiz Rhamut, it is not seen that the Rohilla arms were extensively employed, or that any important revolution affected their state. They had, previously to the Vizier's invasion of Rohilcund, carried on a desultory war with the Marhattas, and seized on their districts in the Duab, which continued a short time in the Rohilla possession. The Marhattas who afterwards came in great force, expelled the Rohillas from the Duab, and laid waste the eastern quarter of Rohilcund. — As a short history of the life of Shujah-ud-Dowlah will be annexed, in which the principal events of the Rohilla war are noticed, a discussion of them in this place becomes unnecessary.

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[*] Towns in Rohilcund.—See Rennell's map.

[†] This chief, confiding in an engagement made with the Vizier, in which it was stipulated that he should not be molested by the combined army, did not appear in arms during the Rohilla War, 1743. But the Vizier, violating the agreement, stripped him of his territory and treasure.

[‡] Situate at the distance of forty-four computed miles to the westward of Barelly.—Vide Rennell's map.

[§] Ahmed Khan commanded part of the Rohilla army in the war, 1774.

[‖] Futtah Khan held the office of treasurer, a master of the household.

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[*] Towns lying in the west and south quarters of Rohilcund.

[†] Ahmed Khan, the son of Futtah Khan, after the defeat of the Rohillas in 1774, joined the army of Fyze Ullah, at Laldong, and retired with that chief to Rampour.

The form of government adopted by the Rohillas in India, of near affinity to that which exists in their native country, may be denominated feudal. The successors of Daoud Khan possessing slender hereditary pretensions, and surrounded by the men who had essentially aided in the first conquest, held but a limited sway. Sundah Khan and Futtah Khan, two of the most respectable, of the Rohillas, never ceased to oppose the progress of Hafiz Rhamut, which was conspicuously directed to sovereign rule; and by a zealous attachment to the party of Saud Ullah's widow, who was beloved by the people, they formed a moderate counterpoise to the encroaching power of that chief. Here it becomes my duty, whether as the compiler of Rohilla tracts, or a recorder of common fame, to briefly delineate the character of Hafiz Rhamut. Born and reared to manhood in a country*, where its people are taught to consider a military as the only laudable profession, and that the sword conveys an irreproachable title to every acquisition, Hafiz Rhamut, constitutionally brave, became an enterprizing soldier. His government was founded on the common basis of an active system; but flourished from the knowledge he possessed of its resources. He seems to have maintained a general good faith in public transactions, and though in the attainment of power he trampled on another's right, his genius and valour preserved the allegiance, and perhaps the love of his people; who saw in him a master, whose hand was equally prompt to indulgence or protection. And here I am impelled to say, that Shujah-ud-Dowlah alone, would never have dared Hafiz to the field. Hafiz Rhamut, like most of the chiefs or princes of a country, where succession falls to the strongest arm, was unfortunate in his family: Enayat Khan, his eldest son, took up arms against him, was defeated, and obliged to seek shelter with Shujah-ud-Dowlah, in whose army he served at the battle of Buxar*. Dissensions had arisen also amongst the descendants of the other Rohilla officers, which involved the country in general commotion, and on the arrival of the united forces of the English and Shujah-ud-Dowlah in Rohilcund, the chiefs appeared to dread the increase of each other's power, more than the invasion of an enemy.

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* Afghanistan.

I WILL conclude this treatise, by observing, that the Afghan conquerors of Rohilcuud, were a rapacious, bold, and lawless race of men; and it should seem, that after they had established a government in India, they adopted the more effeminate vices of the south, and became intriguing, deceitful, and treacherous. The Rohillas, especially the lower classes, were, with but few exceptions, the only sect of Mahometans in India who exercised the profession of husbandry; and their improvements of the various branches of Agriculture, were amply recompensed by the abundance, and superior quality of the productions of Rohilcund*.

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* He afterwards returned to Rohilcund, where he died before the last Rohilla war.

THE actions of Najeb Khan, those especially which occupied the latter periods of his life, bearing a close relation to the history of Rohilcund, I have given them a separate place in the treatise; which as it represents him in a more conspicuous light, will afford me the sensible pleasure of offering up a tribute of respect and applause, to the memory of a brave liberal soldier, and a statesman of distinguished ability.

NAJEB Khan, the nephew of the Bisharut Khan, mentioned in the Rohilla sketches, came into Rohilcund during the administration of Ali Mahomet. He was at first, appointed to the charge of a very small party, not consisting, it is said, of more than twelve horse and foot. But his courage and activity soon brought him into the notice of Ali Mahomet, who entrusted him with a respectable military command, and procured for him in marriage the daughter of Dhoondy Khan. Whilst Ali Mahomet governed the Sirhend districts, Najeb Khan, who had followed his fortunes, rendered him an important service, in reducing to obedience a refractory Hindoo chief of that quarter. After the return of the Rohillas into Rohilcund, Dhoondy Khan bestowed the districts of Duranaghur and Chaundpour, which had been granted to him in the original division of Rohilcund, on Najeb Khan, who did not long confine himself within this narrow limit; but crossing the Ganges, he made depredations on the territory of the Goojers*, as far as Ghous Ghur and Sarunpour†.

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* This country is said to have yielded to the Rohillas, one million sterling, which is now reduced by the injudicious management of the Nair, to thirty, or at most, forty thousand pounds.

On the death of Mahomet Shah‡, Sufdar Jung avowedly announced his hostile disposition to the court, which was then wholly directed by the Vizier Ghaze-ud-Dein, and prepared to lead an army to Delhi. Sufdar Jung prevailed on the Rohilla chiefs, ever ready to draw the sword in the pursuit of plunder or conquest, to join his army, which had advanced to the neighbourhood of Delhi, when an Hindoo* officer of the court, attached to the interests of Ghaze-ud-Dein, induced Najeb Khan, by high offers of advancement, to secede from the combination, and espouse the imperial cause.—Alarmed at this defection, the residue of the Rohilla troops, commanded by Hafiz Rhamut, retired into their own country. Najeb Khan was honourably received by Ghaze-ud-Dein, and being soon after promoted to the command of the army, he attacked Sufdar Jung, and compelled him to cross the Ganges. On the successful conclusion of this campaign, in which the Rohilla was wounded, he received from the King the title of Najeb-ud-Dowlah.

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* A sect of the Hindoos, in Upper India, of the fourth tribe who equally exercise the profession of agriculture, and arms.

† Vide Rennell's map.

‡ Mahomet Shah died A. D. 1746; and was succeeded by his son Ahmed Shah.

Subsequently to this event, he moved with a strong body of troops into Rohilcund, where he established, in the districts which formerly pertained to him, a fixed government; and though he disclaimed a dependence on Hafiz Rhamut, he was considered a political member of the Rohilla state. From a powerful support at court, and the distinguished popularity of his character, Najeb-ud-Dowlah was feared and envied by Hafiz, who saw in the growing influence of this chief, a mortifying diminution of his own. A mutual enmity soon produced hostilities, which ultimately involved the whole body of the Rohillas in a civil war.

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* Named Devi Sing.

On the commencement of the dissentions, Saud Ullah Khan, the nominal head of the Rohilla states, had embraced the party of Najeb-ud-Dowlah, which he was compelled to abandon by the superior power of Hafiz Rhamut, and his partisans who, possessing the resources of the country, could indulge or distress him at pleasure. Najeb-ud-Dowlah, perceiving his inability to combat so formidable an opposition, retired from Rohilcund, and again attached himself to the service of the court. After his arrival in Delhi, he was either directed by the ministry, or he solicited permission, to reduce the Mahometan governor of Sarunpour*, who maintained a forcible possession of that quarter, and had refused to render any account of the imperial portion of the revenue. The enemy retiring on the approach of Najeb-ud-Dowlah, the districts of Sarunpour and Ghous Ghur became an easy aquisition. The activity and enterprise of this officer, who now commanded an approved body of soldiers, prompted him again to cross the Ganges, and seize on his former possessions, to which he annexed the lands of Tillalabad. In the northern division of this new conquest, he founded the town Najebabad*, which in a short time was filled with commodious and beautiful structures, and became the centre of an extensive commerce. At the distance of a mile from the town, he erected the fort of Najeb Ghur †, where the adjacent inhabitants, in the event of war, might deposit their property, and find also a security for their persons. A want of more precise dates, which I have in vain searched for, has thrown a confusion and perplexity on the preceding actions of Najeb-ud-Dowlah; but it is now seen that in the year 1757‡, this officer was promoted to the station of Meer Bucksy, with the title of Amir-ul-Omrah, at the instance of Ghaze-ud-Dein; who in 1753, having deposed and deprived of sight Ahmed Shah, raised to the throne Alumguir Sani, the father of the present Emperor.

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* This town stands on the northern part of the Duab; and is at this time held by Gholam Kauder Khan, the grandson of Najeb-ud-Dowlah.

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* Situate in the northern divisions of Rohilcund.—Vide Rennell.

† This fort is also called Patter Ghur.

‡ Dow's History of Hindostan.—In the Khazanahee Omah, a Persian book which treats cursorily of the actions of the late Emperors of Hindostan, it is said, that Najeb-ud-Dowlah was appointed to this office by Ahmed Shah Duranny. I have followed Dow's History, from the probability that Najeb-ud-Dowlah would receive his commission from the Court, under whose authority he acted.

When the Durannies entered* Hindostan, in their fourth expedition to participate in the wreck of the Empire, Najeb-ud-Dowlah, who was himself an Afghan†, and aware of the superior power of Ahmed Shah, attached hinself without reserve to the fortunes of that prince; dissolving the connection he had formed with Ghaze ud-Dein, without hesitation, or an honourable regard for the favours he had received from the hand of that minister. The return of Ahmed Shah‡ into his own country, enabled the Marhattas to exercise an almost undivided authority in the upper provinces of India. Najeb-ud-Dowlah, the only Mahometan chief of power or ability, that was hostile to their interest, could not bring into the field an army of sufficient strength to oppose their progress. He had been compelled to take post in the vicinity of Sookertal, a fort situate on the west side of the Ganges§, where he was reduced to such extremity, that, had not the approach of the Rohillas and Shujah-ud-Dowlah, who were moving to his assistance, together with the rumour of the Duranny Ahmed Shah's march towards the Jumna, obliged the Marhattas to retire, it is probable that Najeb-ud-Dowlah would have fallen under the superior force of their arms.

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* In A. D. 1756.

† The inhabitants of the space of territory, lying between the river Attoc and Persia, are called Afghans.

‡ Ahmed Shah returned into Afghanistan, from his fourth Indian expedition, in the year 1757.

§ Now in ruins—See Rennell's map.

In the same year, but previously to this event, Ghaze-ud-Dein had cut off the Emperor*, and placed Shah Jehan the second on the throne. The capital no longer contained any grand object of ambition. The power of its princes had been sunk and trampled on, its treasures had been plundered, and its gates indiscriminately thrown open to Hindoos and Mahometans, according to the varying power of the day. The Marhattas, who in their turn gave the law at Delhi, deposed the Shah Jehan, who had been exhibited to promote the views of Ghaze-ud-Dein, and raised to the throne, Jehan Bucht, the son of *Ali Gohur*†. After some desultory actions, the Duranny Ahmed Shah, joined by Najeb-ud-Dowlah and their Rohilla chiefs, attacked the Marhattas, and defeated them, in a general engagement on the plains of Bandelly‡, in 1770; when Najeb-ud-Dowlah singularly distinguished himself, routing it is said, with his own troops, the division of the Marhatta army commanded by Duttah Pattelle*, who fell in the field. In the battle of Panifrett †, the fortune of which was to decide the existence of the Mahometan Empire in India, the Afghans were powerfully assisted by Najeb-ud-Dowlah, who, during the period of an important intercourse with them, evinced an invaried fidelity and spirit.

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* Alumguir Sani.

† One of the domestic titles of the present Emperor.

‡ In the neighbourhood of Delhi, at the passage of the Jumna, called Bouraree Ghaut.

The overthrow of the Marhattas, and Ahmed Shah's return into his own country, contributed to give the affairs of the Empire a less distressful aspect; and the abilities of Najeb-ud-Dowlah ‡, who conducted the administration of the young prince §, again reflected on the capital a glimmering ray of respect. A war now broke out between Najeb-ud-Dowlah and the Jatts, a powerful and warlike tribe of Hindoos, who in the general convulsion of the state, had seized on large tracts of territory, confining on the western bank of Jumna, and comprehending the strong holds of Deigh, Combere, Burtpoure, and the city of Agrah. The cause of these hostilities is not explained in any document that has reached my knowledge; nor would perhaps throw any strong light on the history of Najeb-ud-Dowlah. They arose probably from the source* which produced the various contests and disorders of the times; when the strong arm, unrestrained by fear of punishment, bore down the weaker; when established rights were subverted, and the private bonds of faith, with impunity, rent asunder.

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* One of the Marhatta generals, and the uncle of Mhadgee Scindia, now so well known in the annals of India.

† This decisive action was fought in February 1761.

‡ Ghaze-ud-Dein, in 1761, left Delhi, where he could no longer preserve an influence, and where he was detested for his cruelties and treachery.

§ Tewen Rucht.

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* The seeds which produced the decay of the Moghul empire, and which at this day have ripened into such malignancy, took a deep root during the reign of Aurungzebe; who, though one of the most sagacious princes of the house of Timur, endangered the welfare of the state, and the security of his subjects, by an injudicious impulse of domestic affection. He portioned amongst his sons, who were active and ambitious, the most valuable provinces of the empire; where acquiring an influence and strength, that cannot be held by an Asiatic subject with safety to the monarch, they expected with impatience the event that was to determine their schemes and pretensions. On the death of Aurungzebe, the sons eagerly took up arms, and after deluging the country with blood, the war was successfully terminated by Bahauder Shah, who may be said to have mounted the throne of Delhi, from a mound of fraternal and kindred slaughter.—Not being endowed with experience, nor perhaps the genius of his father, the officers who governed the provinces, relaxed during his short reign in their allegiance, shewing obedience to such orders, as might tend to promote their own views. The Marhattas, whom Aurungzebe had nearly subdued by the active efforts of a thirty years war, descended, at his death, from their mountains, and rapidly recovered the territories from which they had been expelled. Previously to the Persian invasion, the subadahs of Oude and the Decan, having virtually erected their chiefships into independent states, commanded, without the controul of the court, large armies, and disposed of the amount of the revenues, without rendering any account to the imperial treasury. The Empire, thus enfeebled, and governed by a luxurious and indolent prince, invited Nadir Shah to conquest and plunder. The river Attoc, the natural western bar-

SOORIDGE Mull, the chief of the Jatts, commenced the campaign by attacking a Mahometan Jaguirdar*, the adherent of Najeb-ud-Dowlah. But the event of this war, which was fatal to Sooridge Mull†, did not confer any essential advantage on Najeb-ud-Dowlah, though he gained an easy and complete victory over the enemy: for the districts of Sarunpour had been over-run by the Sicques, against whom he was obliged to march, and to forego the fruits of his success.

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river of India, on whose bank Mahomet Shah should have stood in person, was crossed by the Persians without opposition; and this inglorious prince, unworthy of the diadem he wore of the illustrious house which had given to the world a Baber, an Akbar, and an Aurungzebe, surrendered to them without drawing his sword, the wealth and dominions of Hindostan.—A subsequent train of diversified ruin, moving with a rapidity not paralleled in the history of nations, has now left no other vestige of the Moghul empire, than the name of king.

[*] Moosah Khan, the Jaguirdar of Furrucknagur, a district lying between Delhi and Agrah.

[†] Sooridge Mull was killed in December 1763, in an action fought on the plains of Ghaziabad, near the river Hindia, and about eighteen miles distant from Delhi.

In the autumn of the year 1764, Najeb-ud-Dowlah was besieged in Delhi, by a numerous army of Mahometans, Jatts, and Sicques, collected by Jewayir Sing, the son of Sooridge Mull, who had formed sanguine hopes of crushing the power of Najeb-ud-Dowlah, and revenging the death of his father. Ghaze-ud-Dein, who had brought with him a body of Patans from Furruckabad, also joined the confederate forces. After experiencing the distresses of a close siege of four months, heightened by a scarcity of provisions and money, Najeb-ud-Dowlah prevailed on Muller Row, the Marhatta officer, to detach his troops from the army of Jewayir Sing, who, on the desertion of so powerful an ally, raised the siege. The relief of Delhi was hastened also by the arrival of Ahmed Shah Duranny, at Sirhend, who was approaching with the avowed purpose of affording succour to Najeb-ud-Dowlah. This chief had but a short time breathed from the embarrassments of the late combination, when he saw that his most active exertions would be called forth to defend the territory he held on the western side of the Ganges, from the ravages of the Sicques;—a people constitutionally adapted for carrying on the various species of desultory war.

Najeb-ud-Dowlah formed a junction in the year 1770, with the Marhatta army, which came into Hindostan under the command of Tuckejei Holcar and Mhadgee Scindia, whom, according to my Rohilla papers, he had invited to effect the expulsion of the Sicques from the Duab. Najeb-ud-Dowlah, who had in the latter period of his life fallen into an infirm state of health, was seized with a severe illness in the Marhatta camp. Leaving behind him a part of his army under the command of Zabilah Khan, his eldest son, he proceeded towards Rohilcund; but the disorder became so violent, that he could not proceed farther than Happer, a small town in the Duab, where he died*. The body was carried to Najebad, and interred in a tomb that had been erected by his order, in the vicinity of that town. Najeb-ud-Dowlah held in his own right, and in fief of the Empire, a tract of country extending from Panifret eastwards to Najebad; in the Duab, it was confined on the north, by Sarunpour, and on the south, by the suburbs of Delhi; and in Rohilcund, it reached from the mountains of Siringnaghur, to the districts of Moradabad †.

The revenue of this territory in its improved state, was calculated at 100 lacks of rupees; but it was reduced to seventy, it is said, by the depredations of the Sicques, within a term of three years; nor would this amount have been preserved, had he not displayed in his operation with those marauders, a distinguished skill in the alternate exercise of arms, and political address. The death of Najeb Khan was lamented by the people whom he governed, and his memory at this day is respected and beloved throughout the upper parts of India. He supported the character of a gallant soldier; he encouraged agriculture, and protected commerce; and he was considered as the only remaining chief of the Empire, capable of opposing any barrier to the inroads of the Marhatta and Sicque nations.

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* His death happened in October 1770.

† A principal town in Rohilcund, standing on the banks of the Ramgunge.—See Rennell's map.

SUCCINCT MEMOIRS

OF

SHUJAH-UD-DOWLAH.

A VARIETY of materials, supplied by the liberality and investigation of my friends, has enabled me to write an abbreviated history of the family and life of Shujah-ud-Dowlah; a prince who supported a conspicuous character on the theatre of Hindostan, and who, from his transactions with the English nation in India, has founded an important epocha in their annals. Having selected with caution, and unreservedly commented on the documents that have come before me, I firmly trust, that no marks of passion, no design to overcharge, or suppress facts, will appear in the relation. I am desirous also of exhibiting a general outline of the actions of a prince, who stood much above mediocrity in the estimation of his subjects; that by a knowledge of his character, and of their sentiments, some satisfactory opinions may be formed, of the disposition and moral qualities of the natives of Hindostan.

Shujah-ud-Dowlah, the son of Sufdar Jung, by a daughter of Saadut Khan, was born at Delhi, in the year 1729 of the Christian æra. Though a long line of illustrious ancestors be not the strongest tenure of the dominions held by Indian princes, who are taught to consider fortune, and the power of arms, as the primary aids in acquiring and maintaining empire; yet a distinguished descent imparts a lustre and weight to the other qualities of a fortunate leader, and he himself beholds it with ostentatious pleasure. Historical truth calls on me to do justice to the claims of the family of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, who, in Mr. Dow's History of Hindostan, is denominated "The infamous son, of a more infamous Persian pedlar*." The ancestors of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, have for a long space of time been established in Nishabur, a town of Khorosan, where they held landed possessions, and were classed amongst the principal inhabitants of the province.

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* Mr. Dow uniformly endeavours to throw an odium on the family and character of the late Vizier. When informed of the opprobrious terms used by that writer, in discussing the subject of his Domestic History, Shujah-ud-Dowlah attributed the language to the resentment of Mr. Dow, for having been refused the salt-petre farm of the Allahabad districts.

During my journey through Persia, I had an opportunity of conversing with some of the inhabitants of Nishabur, who bore indisputable testimony to the ancient rank of the family of Shujah-ud-Dowlah. That this fact may be more fully exemplified, though it leads to prolixity, it is necessary to mention, that Mirzah Nasseer, the father of the maternal grand-sire* of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, came into Hindostan in the beginning of the reign of Bahaudar Shah †, by whom he was appointed to an office of trust at Patna, where his tomb yet remains. Mirza Nasseer had two sons, the second of whom, Mahomet Aumeen, on being apprised of the death of his father, left Persia, and about the year 1708 visited the court of Furrucksir. He was appointed by this prince, governor of the fort of Agrah; and soon rising to greater honours, he ultimately became the Viceroy of Oude, by the title of Saredut Khan Burhaan-ul-Mulck. By the reduction of this province, which had long been in a state of rebellion, he acquired a conspicuous military reputation, and was promoted to the office of Darogha Khas*, with the titular command of 7000 horse.

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* Saadut Khan, intitled Burhaan-ul-Mulck.

† This emperor commenced his reign in 1707, and died in 1712.

About this time, Mahomet Muckeim, afterwards intitled Sufdar Jung, the nephew of Saadut Khan, came into India, and had the daughter of his uncle given to him in marriage; of which, Shudah-ud-Dowlah was, I believe, the only male issue. Sufdar Jung, who was active, and possessed useful abilities, became the deputy of Saadut Khan in the government of Oude.

In the middle periods of Mahomet Shah's† reign, the Marhattas, at the instigation, it is supposed, of the Nizam Ul Mulck‡, who was then at variance with the court, entered the Emperor's dominions, and committed severe devastations; but in attempting to penetrate into Oude, they were attacked, and after a sharp conflict, completely routed by the troops of Saadut Khan, who commanded in person. This officer afterwards joined the imperial army, which had been collected for the purpose of expelling the enemy; but on a pretence of some disgust, he left the camp and retired into Oude, without having seen the Emperor. It has been supposed that Saadut Khan, in conjunction with Nizam Ul Mulck, invited Nadir Shah into India, with the assurance of a powerful interiour assistance, and an easy conquest of the Empire. This supposed fact, has been subscribed to by Mr. Dow in his History of Hindostan, with positive decision in favour of its authenticity; and it is partially noticed in the History of Nadir Shah, by Mr. Fraser, who has treated his subject with candour, and generally with perspicuity. This writer assserts, that Saadut Khan was engaged in a treacherous negotiation, which the disaffected nobles of Delhi were said to have maintained with the court of Persia; but here I must observe, though it diverts the immediate object of my research, that Fraser's assertion stands unaccompanied by any detail of events, descriptive of the benefit which Saadut Khan derived from the invasion: nor has he quoted, in support of it, any specific authority. If a probable conclusion, indeed, is to be drawn from Fraser's relation of the conduct of Saadut Khan, during the Persian war, I would with little hesitasion say, that the Governor of Oude held no share in the councils or favour of Nadir Shah. For had he obtained the protection of that Prince, to which he stood entitled from the services imputed to him, it is not probable, that so large a share of the disaster of the Delhi army at Karnal, would have fallen on this officer.

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* Darogha Khas, an officer of nearly the same description with the Master of the King's Household in England.

† This Prince succeeded to the throne in 1719, and died in 1747.

‡ The Father of the present Nizam Ul Mulck.

In a passage of Fraser's history, it is seen, I think, that Saadut Khan could not have held a confidential correspondence with the Persian, or experienced any portion of his indulgence. Fraser says, "Before I relate the treacherous "correspondence * carried on between Nizam "Saadut Khan, and Nadir Shah, the invi- "tation they gave him to march towards Hin- "dostan, which was the principal motive that "encouraged him to undertake the expedition, "I shall," &c.—And in the other part of the book it is mentioned, that on Nadir's approach towards the capital, Saadut Khan received orders to join the Delhi army, and that he had already crossed the Ganges, when he was directed to return to Oude. It had been resolved in the councils of Mahomet Shah, which were distracted and wavering, that the army should take the field under the command of the Vizier; and that the Emperor, protected by the forces of Saadut Khan, should remain at Delhi. This Omrah was required to undertake the charge, but an ill state of health at that time detained him in Oude. He arrived in February 1739, in the camp of Mahomet Shah, who receding

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* There is no future mention made of the correspondence.

from his former determination, had joined the army. On the day of Saadut Khan's junction * with the imperial forces, his camp was attacked and plundered by a body of Persian troops, who slew many of his attendants. Saadut Khan, on receiving information of the disaster, left the King's apartments, where he had been in waiting, and hastened to the assistance of his party. Khan Dowrah, the imperial general, marched to the relief of Saadut Khan, and in a short time, most of the imperial officers of Mahomet Shah, who commanded separate bodies, came into action. Nadir Shah, seeing the contest become obstinate and serious, appeared himself at the head of his troops, who then were irresistible, and a complete victory was gained over the Delhi army, which suffered a severe loss in men and officers. Khan Dowrah was mortally wounded: his eldest son, with many Omrahs, were slain; and Saadut Khan fell into the hands of the enemy. In the army of Nadir it is said, that 2500 soldiers, with seven principal officers, were killed, and that 5000 men were wounded. After the engagement, Nadir Shah ordered a tent to be pitched near his own quarters, for the acccommodation of Saadut Khan, and two other Omrahs of Mahomet Shah.

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* The army was encamped at Karnal, about 100 miles to the westward of Delhi.

The baggage of these officers was stationed on the outside of the camp, together with their servants, none of whom were permitted to attend them, nor were they allowed to make use of their own provisions.—Little farther mention is made of Saadut Khan by Mr. Fraser after this affair, than that he was appointed to guard the city of Delhi, on the day of Nadir Shah's first entrance.—This writer likewise says, that Nadir Shah, summoning Saadut Khan before him on the 9th of March 1739, reprehended him in harsh language for being the cause of impeding the collection of the imposts*, and that on the next day, Saadut Khan died, having been before weak and indisposed. Mr. Fraser concludes his relation of Saadut Khan, by observing, that some imagined he died through anger of the abusive reproach of Nadir; and others are of opinion, that jealousy provoked him to take poison †.

Mr. Fraser's relation of the conduct of Saadut Khan, the spirit of which is strictly adhered to, now awaits a dispassionate decision, which is to determine the probable truth of Saadut Khan's invitation of Nadir Shah into India. This author, who has unquestionably left us a valuable tract of Indian history, in other passages of his book, observes, that the Persian Prince shewed marks of indulgence and liberality to many of Mahomet Shah's Omrahs, but no example is brought forward of his munificence, or even lenity, having been extended to Saadut Khan. On the contrary, it is seen, that Saadut Khan suffered severely in the action of Karnal, and was subsequently treated with much rigour.

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* A tax laid by Nadir shah on the inhabitants of Delhi.

† It was believed at Delhi, that Saadut died of the effects of an ulcer in his leg.

SUFDAR Jung, who resided at Oude at the period of Saadut Khan's death, succeeded to the Government; an appointment, according to the tradition of the family, conferred on him by Nadir Shah: yet I am induced to believe, from the liberal conduct of the Persian to Mahomet Shah, that Sufdar Jung received the promotion at the hands of his own sovereign. Sufdar Jung, after the march of the Persian army from Delhi, came to court, where he obtained the office of Meer Atush, or grand master of the ordnance.

IN the year 1746, Ahmed Shah, the Duranny, invaded Hindostan, and had advanced to Sirhend, where he was successfully opposed by the Delhi army, in which Sufdar Jung had a considerable charge. Soon after the accession of Ahmed Shah * to the throne, Sufdar Jung was advanced to the Vizarut, and his son, Shujah-

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* This prince commenced his reign in 1747.

ud-Dowlah, to the command of the ordnance. But a strong party at court, composed of Ghaze-ud-Dein*, Najeb-ud-Dowlah, the Rohilla chief, and Tameid Khan, a court eunuch, prevailing against the interest of Sufdar Jung, he was compelled to leave Delhi; but not before he had cut off Janied Khan, whom he caused to be assassinated in his own house, at an entertainment given to the eunuch.

SUFDAR Jung, having collected a large force, invaded the Imperial territories, and laid siege† to the capital, which was closely invested for the space of six months. He is accused of committing many enormities and wanton acts of violence during the siege, particularly of cannonading the palace, the destruction of which could not have facilitated the capture of the fort. The court of Delhi was compelled to accede to the terms of the rebel, who required a formal grant of the provinces of Oude and Allahabad, for himself and his heirs.—Sufdâr Jung died in the year 1754, during the reign of Alumguir Sani, and was succeeded in the subahdarry of Oude, by his son Shujah-ud-Dowlah‡, then about twenty-five years of age. As the design of this work does not admit of any enlargement on the subject of Sufdar Jung, it will suffice to say, that his disposition was severe, often cruel; and that his rapacious avarice threw uncommon odium on his name.

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* The grandson of the great Nizam-ul-Mulck.

† This event happened in 1753.

‡ The domestic name of this prince was Tillah-ud-Dein Hyder. His father, who was in the Oude province during the birth of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, built, in the neighbourhood of Lucknow, the fort of Tillahabad, in commemoration of the event.

To illustrate the commencement of Shudah-ud-Dowlah's public life, it is necessary to describe the situation of the court of Delhi at that period. Ghaze-ud-Dein, who had in 1753 deposed and deprived of sight Ahmed Shah; raised to the throne Alumguir Sani, whose eldest son Aly-Ghohir, fearing the treacherous disposition and ill designs of the minister, fled from Delhi*. This prince, accompanied by a small body of Marhattas, levied for a few months, a scanty contribution in the districts lying to the southward of the capital. But being soon involved in embarrassments from so slender a provision, he solicited the aid of the Rohilla, Najeb Khan, who refusing to engage in his cause, he retired into the territory of Shujah-ud-Dowlah. The prince was treated for a certain time with hospitality and respect at Oude, but could not obtain any military aid: and being at length civilly dismissed, he proceeded to Allahabad, which was then held by Mahomet Khuli-Khan, a native of

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* This event happened in 1758.

Persia, and a cousin-german of Shujah-ud-Dowlah. Mahomet Khuli, readily entering into the schemes of the prince, which were directed at the reduction of the provinces of Bahar and Bengal, the joint forces crossed the Caramnassa, and were, after various successes, defeated in 1761, by the English troops, at Suan. The honourable and humane treatment which Aly-Ghohir experienced during his residence in the English camp, created a jealousy in Cassum Ali Khan, who from the recent testimony of the prince's hostility to his interests, and seeing also the English officer much attached to his person, expressed a virulent dislike of the connection. The prince accused Cassum of fomenting those dissensions in his army, which ultimately produced a desperate mutiny; when he probably would have suffered much indignity, had he not been protected by the English army. This event induced Aly-Ghohir to retire into the dominions of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, who received the fugitive king * in a manner expressive of zealous attachment, and avowed himself the champion of the royal cause.

To illustrate an event in the history of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, we must advert to the annals of a

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* At this period, Ali Ghohir had nominally succeeded to the Empire, by the title of Shah Alum. His father died in 1760.

former period, and notice its origin. Sufdar Jung had appointed to the command of Allahabad, his nephew Mahomet Khuli Khan, who, on the accession of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, seems to have wholly withdrawn himself from the authority of the court of Oude. Aware of the popularity and military abilities of this officer, Shujah-ud-Dowlah did not prosecute any directly hostile measures against Allahabad. During his expedition into Bahar, Mahomet Khuli had placed the government of his possessions in the hands of Nudjef Khan; the chief, who at a future period became so conspicuous in the upper parts of India. Shujah-ud-Dowlah, embracing the favourable occasion of Mahomet Khuli's absence, advanced with a small army towards the limits of Allahabad. He maintained an amicable intercourse with Nudjef Khan, whom he amused by solemn protestations of attachments to the welfare of Mahomet Khuli; and represented, that the Duranny invasion had induced him to come into that quarter to solicit an asylum for his family in the fort of Allahabad, as his own country possessed no place of equal safety. Nudjef Khan would not listen to the request, but waited the instructions of Mahomet Khuli, who directed, that Shujah-ud-Dowlah's family should be admitted into the fortress with a certain number of domestic guards. It is said, that Shujah-ud-Dowlah introduced into the female equipages a body of armed men, who rushed on the garrison, and took the fort without any effusion of blood. This capture, which happened about the year 1761, rendered the affairs of Mahomet Khuli desperate, and obliged him to become a dependent on the bounty of Shujah-ud-Dowlah; who, in the course of few months, threw him, on a charge of state crimes, into prison. Mahomet Khuli, from his valour and liberality, was held in high estimation in the Oude army, which in loud murmurs, and in comparisons not favourable to their prince, warmly lamented his misfortunes. Nudjef Khan, on the capture of Allahabad, had entered into the service of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, and exerted himself with a zeal that endangered his own safety, to procure the release of Mahomet Khuli*; but this officer had become an object of such dread at the court of Oude, from the rumours incessantly circulated in his favour, that the fears of Shujah-ud-Dowlah were not allayed until the destruction of his prisoner had been compleated by assassination. Shujah-ud-Dowlah obtained from the King the appointment of Vizier; and being now possessed of a numerous army, and the imperial person, he might justly be considered the most powerful chief in Hindostan.

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* Mahomet Khuli was cut off at the fort of Tillalabad:—this example disclosed an evil, which is usually seen to pervade Asiatic states. A despotic Prince cannot always impart so full a force to his system of tyranny, as to shape to the spirit of its edicts, the minds and language of his subjects. Without the compendious savage aid of the dagger, the road to conquest and empire would not perhaps have been so widely opened to a Timur, a Nadir Shah, or, in our day, to a Hyder Ali. When Shujah-ud-Dowlah had formed the resolution of cutting off Mahomet Khuli, he had not yet consolidated the structure of his government. The officers of his army, Persians, Moghuls, or Afghans, were daring turbulent men, and had large claims of pay. They saw in Mahomet Khuli,

In the year 1763, the war broke out between the English and Cassum Ali Khan, which, after a diversified train of success and disasters, terminated in Cassum's expulsion from the province of Bengal, and his retreat, in the latter end of the same year, with the remains of his troops, and a large treasury, into the dominions of

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a brave soldier of distinguished birth, of liberal and popular manners. They had witnessed the former treachery of Shujah-ud-Dowlah to him, and suspected his future purposes. Though this Prince dreaded the formidable qualities of Mahomet Khuli, he equally dreaded a formal indulgence of his wishes. Had he summoned this officer to a trial, or publicly ordered his death, the danger of a revolution would have been incurred: for the low state of his treasury, a long arrear, and an inherent deficiency of military genius in the Prince, had strongly operated in diminishing the subordination of the army. But such was the barbarous necessity of the measure, the miserable policy of a demi-armed despot, that he was compelled to maintain the safety of his person, and the government of his country, by the secret stab of a poniard.

Shujah-ud-Dowlah. The Bengal Government, which had been long duped by the evasive replies of the Vizier to the repeated remonstrance of his succouring their enemy, discovered that he had drawn his army to Benares, and was preparing to invade Bahar, in conjunction with Cassum Ali. A letter which he addressed to the government of Bengal, peremptorily avowed his intentions. In arrogant and contemptuous language he says, "that the English, abusing "the favours conferred on them by the Emperors of Hindostan, have fomented disturbances "in the empire; and that instead of limiting "their exertions to trade, as became merchants, "they interfered in the imperial affairs, exalting and deposing at pleasure, the servants "of the crown. He calls upon them to justify "their actions, and to withdraw forthwith, all "their people from the King's dominions; and "in the event of disobedience, threatens them "with the royal displeasure, which he denominated *The type of God's wrath.*" Though Shujah-ud-Dowlah had buoyed up Cassum Ali with the promise of re-instating him in the provinces, we cannot easily believe, that the man who has been recently seen betraying and cutting off his kinsman, who held both the claims of friendship and affinity, would, without a manifest and great advantage, incur the risk of fortune and life, in the cause of a stranger. Had the arms of the Vizier prevailed in the course of the war, the general tenour of his actions supports a fair conjecture, that he would without a scruple have annexed the conquered country to his own dominions.

In the course of the year 1764, intelligence was received at Calcutta, that the forces of the Vizier and Cassum Ali, with some few troops attached to the King, had penetrated into the vicinity of Patna; whither our troops, on the approach of the combined army, had precipitately retired. The enemy being afterwards repulsed in assaulting the European trenches, retreated towards the river Soane, where the Vizier made pacific advances to the English officer, who had been authorized to negociate, but pointedly directed to demand, in the preliminary articles the surrender of Sombro, and the European deserters*. The purpose of the Vizier, in the desire he had shewn of obtaining a peace, was only to procure a cessation of hostility, that he might recruit his army. It has been even said, that he endeavoured to bring over to his cause Jaffier Ali Khan, whom the English, on the expulsion of Cassum, had a second time advanced to the government of the provinces. The Vizier, at a future period, did not disavow this supposed correspondence, which appears to have been conducted on the part of Meer Jaffier, by Nundocomar*, who gave the Vizier an assurance of his master's inclination to form a separate treaty. Shujah-ud-Dowlah had derived an essential advantage from the fears of Cassum Ali, now seriously alarmed by the repulse at Patna; and having first inveigled away his European and best native troops, he stripped him of the largest part of his treasure, and military stores. The drift of the Vizier's negociations becoming notoriously manifest, it was resolved that the English army should move towards his camp, and decide the contest in the field; which, after a gallant action of five hours, gave a complete victory to the English †.

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* About two hundred private Europeans had deserted to the Vizier.

THE defeat at Buxar produced obstinate difficulties to the political and military career of the Vizier, who on that event was deserted by all his allies. Shah Alum, in a condition ill suited to the title he bore, sought an asylum in the English camp, and loudly accused Shujah-ud-Dowlah of having forced the royal authority into becoming an instrument of his ambition, and a sanction of his hostile designs against the English. This was the second time that the unfortunate Shah Alum had taken refuge in an English army. Here let me direct the view of the reader to the revolutions which, within no wide compass of time, have affected the empire of Hindostan: where at the close he will behold, with an awe and wonder that must humble the proudest of us to the dust, the illustrious house of Timur shaken to its foundation.

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* The person who suffered death at Calcutta, by a sentence of the Supreme Court for forgery.

† The English army consisted of 857 Europeans, and 6215 native troops, of which, 101 Europeans, and 773 sepoys, were killed and wounded. The army of Shujah-ud-Dowlah was computed at 40,000 men, 2000 of whom it is said, were slain in battle. The artillery taken by the English in the field, and in the pursuit of the enemy, amounted to 133 pieces of various sizes.

In the reign of Aurungzebe*, it may, without any violation of truth, be said, that Hindostan, whether for its wealth, magnitude, or military resource, was the most distinguished empire in the Asiatic world. It must also be noticed, that the English, at that period, were not known beyond the sea-coasts of India, where they occupied, under various restrictions, the profession of merchants. Behold the scene presented in our day, of the feeble princes of Delhi, where a near successor of the great Aurungzebe, impelled by the destruction of his fortunes, is seen soliciting, in a country so lately under the dominion of his ancestors, maintenance and protection from an English subject[*].

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* This prince died in 1707, having reigned near fifty years.

THE Vizier, who had now severely felt the superiority of the English arms, shewed a serious desire of peace, but still refused to submit to the terms of the preliminary article, in the manner required by the Bengal Government. He refused to deliver up Cassum Ali, and Sambro, but promised to employ some convenient instrument in destroying the one, and to expel the other from his territories. This mode of qualifying the article, not being acceded to, Colonel Munro marched with the army to Benares. The desertion of a party of Europeans, and the retreat of our troops towards Patna, on his entering the Bahar province, had given him sanguine hopes of success, which were wholly dissipated by the defeat at Buxar: and from that period, he began to model his army on a plan not before practised by the princes of India. The author [†] of a valuable manuscript, which has largely aided this compilation, says, that the æra of the real consequence and power of the Vizier may be dated from the battle of Buxar. Conformably to an usage not unfrequent in Hindostan, this prince had collected a larger army than the sources of his country could maintain; and even where the funds are competent, military payments are ever distributed in the native armies with a griping hand; though the most pernicious effects are often produced by this fallacious system. The strength of the Vizier's army, consisting of cavalry, and a cumbrous body of artillery, was composed of many nations and tribes, but chiefly of Moghuls. These men, naturally violent and licentious, ill-brooked the failure of payment, and on every demand of arrears, either caused dangerous tumults, or forced expedients that were injurious to the civil government of his country. Orders of payment were granted on the farmers, or managers of districts, on whom these soldiers lived at discretion, until the amount was discharged; giving a loose to every species of disorder, and barely leaving a sum sufficient for supplying the other exigencies of the state. But the defeat he sustained at Buxar, relieved the Vizier from his embarrassments: for the Moghul cavalry, without making one spirited effort to sustain the battle, were the first of his troops that left the field; and conscious, it should seem, of their pusillanimous conduct, they never returned to his standard.

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[*] This fact has been again exemplified in the person of Schamdhar Shah, the eldest son of Shah Alum; who, by the interposition of the Bengal Government, receives a pension of three lacks of rupees out of the Oude revenue.

[†] Colonel Polier.

THE English army advanced from Benares to invest Chunar-Ghur; but after making two unsuccessful assaults, it returned to Benares. Bulwunt Sing, the Hindoo chief of the province, had accompanied the Vizier in the campaign against the English, with a party of troops, which were stationed on the north side of the Ganges, opposite to the Buxar plain. After the battle, he withdrew himself from the Vizier, and having effected an accommodation with Colonel Munro, he joined the English army: but alarmed at the repulse of Chunar-Ghur, and the Vizier's approach, he suddenly deserted Benares, and his new connexion.

COLONEL Munro, resigning about this period* the command of the army, was succeeded by Major Fletcher, who immediately marched out of Benares, and pursued the Vizier, who had already invested the town as far as Juanpour. He formed the army into two divisions, one of which, under Major Stibbert, reduced the fort of Chunar-Ghur, and afterwards penetrated into the interior parts of the Vizier's country:—the other division he led himself into the Allahabad districts, which were subjected.

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* This occurrence happened in the beginning of the year 1765.

The Vizier, not able to oppose the success of these parties, called in a body of Marhattas, who entered his country on the side of Corah[*], and were defeated by the English army, then commanded by General Carnac[†]. The Marhattahs were attacked a second time by this officer, at Ackbarpour[‡], and driven from their ground; though not before they had plundered a great part of the European baggage. They were soon obliged to cross the Jumna, which they passed at the ford of Culpee, where they made a stand; but after a short action were wholly dispersed. The Vizier had invited the Marhattas into Oude, without making any provision for the payment of their subsidy; and, fearful that this failure might prompt them to commit an outrage on his person, or create tumults in his army, he never joined their party.

THE affairs of the Vizier had now fallen to a low ebb; he had lost the greater part of his country, his army was thinned by desertions, and he was without a treasury, or an ally. After the battle of Buxar[§], full of alarms and despondency, he had retired into Rohilcund, where he solicited an asylum for his family, and the assistance of the Rohillas. Hafiz Rahmut received him with hospitality, and the respect due to his rank: he afforded him every domestic conveniency, but earnestly advised a peace with the English, as the certain medium of retrieving the desolated states of his fortunes. Destitute of every resource for maintaining a war, and dismayed by ill fortune, the Vizier at length resolved to throw himself unreservedly on the clemency of the English. He dispatched Monsieur Gentil, a French gentleman, to the English camp*, to obtain an actual knowledge of the disposition of his enemies. This agent delivered to the commanding officer, an address from the Vizier, couched in a tenour far different from his former letters. He observed that the animosities which had arisen between them, must be attributed to the dispensations of Providence; that of this he had now manifest witness by the events which had been produced, and that he

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[*] This district, which is situated in the Allahabad territory, is bordered by the Jumna.

[†] In May 1765.

[‡] In May or June, 1765.

[§] Justice to a character, already distinguished in Hindostan for liberality and valour, calls on me to note in this place, the name of Ahmed Khan Bunglish, the Navaub of Furruckabad; who when

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urged by Colonel Munro, after the action of Buxar, to assist in completing the overthrow of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, who had ever been the avowed enemy of his house, said that his honour forbade him to carry arms against the vanquished.

[*] Nudjef Khan was employed also by the Vizier on this occasion to negociate with the English; but that officer was more seriously engaged in accomplishing his own purposes, than in procuring terms for his master.

was determined to commit himself to the justice of the illustrious English chiefs, constant and unchangeable in their friendship. In the conclusion, written by himself, he says, "I re-
"gard not wealth, nor the rule of dominion;
"your friendship and favour are all I desire.
"I will, please God, soon be with you; when
"you may do that for me, which you may
"think best." Lord Clive, who at this time had arrived in Bengal, was empowered by the Government, in conjunction with General Carnac, to negociate with the Vizier: and having met him at Allahabad, in the month of August, 1765, a treaty of peace was finally concluded. The substance was,—That there should be a perpetual treaty of peace between the contracting parties.—That in the event of the dominions of either being invaded, a military aid should be furnished by the other.—That the Vizier is not to receive Cassum Ali, Sombro, or any English deserters into his service.—That Corah and Allahabad be ceded to the King.—That Bulwunt Sing be continued in the zemindary of Benares, which is to be considered a fief of the Subahdary of Oude:—And that Chunar-Ghur, a fort in the province, be given up to the English. That no duties be collected on the merchandize of the Company, in any part of the country of the Vizier. That all such subjects

or relations of the Vizier, who may have assisted the English during the late war, be pardoned;—and, That this treaty remain in force with the descendants of the Vizier.

THUS was Shujah-ud-Dowlah restored to the possession of his dominions by the victorious English, after having been reduced by their arms to the verge of ruin. The terms granted to him, breathe a liberal heroic spirit, and conspicuously distinguished the mind from which they sprang. The memory of the Indian hero, ill merits the stain impressed on it by Mr. Dow, who says, "Shujah-ud-Dowlah, was still possessed of wealth, and the virtue of the conquerors, was by no means proof against temptation."—But it is a fact supported by the purest authority, that Lord Clive obstinately rejected every offer of gratuity, made to him by the Vizier. Exclusive* of the articles of the treaty, a private agreement, entered into by the contracting parties, stipulated, on the part of the Vizier, a payment of fifty lacks of rupees to the English Government, for defraying the expences of the war; as the English at this period, did not ostensibly interfere in the administration of the Bengal provincial affairs; which on the death of Meer Jaffier had devolved on his son Nuzzum-ud-Dowlah.

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* The act of re-instating the Vizier in his dominion, not only contributed to exalt the character of the British nation, but was strictly consonant to the principles of sound policy. It evinces also a foresight which is grievously verified in the events of succeeding times. Lord Clive, in his letter to the Company, says, "Our restoring to Shujah-ud-Dowlah, the whole of his dominions, proceeds more from the desire of not extending the Company's territorial possessions, than the generous policy of attaching him for ever to our interests by gratitude; though this has been the apparent, and is by many thought to be the real motive. Had we ambitiously attempted to retain the conquered country, experience would soon have proved the impracticability of such a plan. The establishment of an increased army must have been

The treaty entered into with Shujah-ud-Dowlah, was executed by this prince, on one part, and on the other by the Subahdar of Bengal, in conjunction with Lord Clive: but that all

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" added to your list, and more chiefships appointed. Acts of op-
" pression and innumerable abuses would have been committed,
" which, at such a distance from the presidency, could neither
" have been prevented, or remedied; and must infallibly have laid
" the foundation of another war. Our old privileges and possessions
" would have been endangered by every supply we might have
" been tempted to afford in support of the new, and the natives
" must have finally triumphed in our inability to sustain the weight
" of our own ambition."—In India, it is to be noted, donations are presented to men of power, or those who are supposed to influence them, for personal protection, and for the security or acquisition of property. A rejected offer is the established signal of displeasure, and either indicates its insufficiency, or that some more adequate reward has been already preferred. Shujah-ud-Dowlah was at first alarmed at the conduct of Lord Clive, whose refusal of any gift was construed into a disposition inimical to his interests. But this prince beheld the soldier's magnanimity with admiration, when at the conclusion of the treaty, he received, in token of friendship, a ring of moderate value.

future embarrassments might be obviated, a delegated power, authorizing the English India Company to manage and controul the revenues of the provinces, was obtained from the king. It was also stipulated, that in consideration of the appointment of Nuzzum-ud-Dowlah to the military and executive government of the provinces, and his grant* of the civil jurisdiction to the English, the sum of twenty-six lacks of rupees† should be annually paid to the king, out of the revenues of Bengal. The districts of Allahabad and Corah were at the same time dismembered from the Vizier's territory, and ceded to Shah Alum, that he might be enabled to maintain, without a restraint, the dignity of his station.

THOUGH he amply experienced the liberality of the English, the Vizier had suffered important injuries during the war. From the revenue of Oude, which with certain districts of Allahabad, was computed at one hundred and sixty lacks of rupees, the cession of Corah and Allahabad, had deducted thirty-six lacks; and the ravages of his own army, with the incursions of our troops, who had proceeded as far as Lucknow, caused a farther decrease of the general produce of his country.—In acknowledgement for the cession which had been made, Shah Ullum invested the Vizier with the hereditary possession of the province of Oude.

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* It is termed the Dewany.

† From this amount, a pension of two lacks of rupees was bestowed, at the intercession of the English, on Nudjef Khan, who was thought to have rendered them service during the latter part of the Oude war.

THIS prince was now seen to apply with a vigilant assiduity to the administration of his affairs. The revenue department was committed to the charge of men of ability and credit, who in the space of a few years enabled him to discharge a large debt, and to accumulate a fund for the supply of public exigencies.

ON his arrival at Oude, after the Allahabad treaty, he called together, it is said, his principal officers, and making known to them the engagements he had made with the English, he desired their aid in performing the obligation. Through this mode of requisition, which is often practised by the princes of India in time of need, the Vizier obtained some aid; though far short of his necessities. His Begum, seeing the difficulties that surrounded him, and the distressed state of his mind, divested herself of the jewels, and other valuable ornaments she possessed, and entreated that the amount might be applied to the arrangement of his affairs. It is mentioned, that Shujah-ud-Dowlah was so warmly affected by this mark of the Begum's attachment, which wholly removed his embarrassment, that he solemnly swore, he would never, while he resided in the same place, absent himself from her apartment after a certain hour of the night; and that he would thenceforth ever esteem her his faithful friend and counsellor. Nor does it appear that he deviated from the vow he made to the Begum, who became from that day the repository of his treasure, and all his secret transactions.

THE defeat at Buxar, having relieved the Vizier from the maintenance of a turbulent crowd of cavalry, he began to introduce in his army, a system of order and regular payment. He had seen that the excellency of the European troops consisted in discipline, the quality of their arms, and the skilful management of artillery. He therefore made strenuous and unceasing efforts in forming a body of infantry, with its requisite establishment of cannon, after the European manner. The undertaking was arduous, and such as few Asiatic princes could have executed. But the genius, activity, and perseverance of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, surmounted the various obstacles, which rooted prejudice and constitutional habit had raised to oppose him. Under the direction of some Frenchmen whom he had invited into his service, an arsenal was founded at Fyzeabad, where guns, musquets and shot, with other military stores, were fabricated with skill and expedition.—From this new magazine, about ten battalions of infantry, and a small train of artillery, were equipped. Though this body was formed at the expence of large sums, and much labour, such judicious arrangements had been adopted for the government of his country, that sufficient funds were created to defray the charge, and to produce a respectable treasury. The cavalry, which at the battle of Buxar amounted to 30,000, appears at this time to have been reduced to little more than 5,000 men. The Vizier derived an essential benefit from the English garrison, that was stationed at Allahabad, which keeping that quarter in awe, relieved him from the necessary expence of protecting a frontier country.

In the year 1768, Shujah-ud-Dowlah saw himself in the possession of a well appointed army, a treasury competent to its charge, and a flourishing productive territory. This quick progress, in endeavouring to dissolve the subordinate connection into which he had been forced, and to extend his power, attracted the notice of Colonel Smith, who was stationed at Allahabad.—This officer represented the conduct of Oude, as dangerous to the interest of the nation, and demanding an immediate interposition. The council, roused by this information, deputed Messrs. Cartier, Russell, and Colonel Smith, to the Vizier, to expostulate on the tendency of his military preparations; which indicated, they observed, a want of confidence in their friendship and support. The deputies held a conference with the Vizier at Benares, in the month of November 1768; when, after much acrimonious altercation, he consented, though with a deep mortification and reluctance, to limit the strength of his troops to the following number and denomination:

Cavalry, — — —	10,000
Ten battalions of sepoys, including officers of every rank, —	10,000
The Nujjeeb regiment of matchlockmen — —	5,000
A corps of Artillery, not to exceed	500
Irregulars, not to be clothed, disciplined, or armed, after the manner of the English sepoys, or Nujjeeb regiment, —	9,500
	35,000

The Vizier considered this restriction as no less unjust, than it was disgraceful to him; but incapable of avowedly opposing the requisition of such powerful and jealous allies, he resolved to execute his plans with more address, though without any essential deviation from the object that biassed all his actions: and it is a well known fact, that he did not, in consequence of the treaty of Benares, dismiss one soldier from his service. His proceedings were conducted with caution, and he was successful in procuring amongst the English themselves, zealous and able advocates; but the Vizier saw, that his ambition and schemes of aggrandisement would ever be encountered by the jealousy of the English, whom he now beheld with mistrust and resentment, and knowing the French were the common enemy of our nation, the Vizier held out many inducements to engage their assistance.

In the year 1772, a Marhatta army, commanded by the chiefs, Scindia, Halcar, and Hurry Punt, penetrating into Hindostan, laid waste the Duab, and possessed themselves of the Etajoh districts, together with all the territory of Ahmed Khan Bungish, except the town and environs of Furruckabad. An invasion so formidable had alarmed the Rohilla chiefs, who, on the approach of the Marhattas, solicited the Vizier to procure the aid of an English brigade; for which they offered the sum of forty lacks of rupees. The Vizier, anxious for the safety of his own country, on the confines of which the enemy were already encamped, accepted, without hesitation, a proposal that would enable him to defray the expences of a body of troops, from which he himself would derive an essential benefit; and he, some time in the year 1772, applied to the English government, for a supply of forces to defend his dominions against the threatened invasion of the Marhattas. Conformably to this requisition, an English Brigade proceeded to Benarcs, whence a detachment of three native battalions, joined by the forces of the Vizier, marched to the frontiers of Rohilcund; the interior parts of which the Marhattas were then laying waste. The commencement of the periodical rains, and the near approach of the combined army, obliged them to rapidly cross the Ganges. The Marhattas, in the following year*, again entered Rohilcund where they committed much devastation; but they retreated on the appearance of the Vizier's army, which had been reinforced by a complete English brigade.

On the night previous to the arrival of the combined forces in the vicinity of the Marhatta encampment, which was formed on the west side of the Ganges, a large body of their cavalry crossed the river, and, dispersing the

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* 1773.

Rohilla troops, they carried off Ahmed Khan, one of the principal officers. The brigade reached the place of this action about break of day, when they observed the Marhattas passing the river*, then fordable, with precipitation; and a distant cannonade ensued, in which the enemy lost a few men and horses: but they soon retired from that quarter, nor have they since appeared in arms on the east side of the Ganges.

THE Vizier, on the retreat of the enemy, demanded the sum of forty lacks of rupees from Hafiz Rhamut Khan, who being at this time the superior officer of the Rohilla forces, and the conductor of their political measures, was urged to fulfil the engagement. Hafiz represented, that the Rohillas had not received the stipulated aid, which, if furnished in the preceding year, might have prevented the injuries done by the enemy; and that the present campaign had been maintained by the Rohilla troops: yet he said, that though the other chiefs should withhold their quota of the claimed amount, he would discharge his proportion to the extent of his ability.

THE ambitious disposition of the Vizier, and the disregard he had hitherto shewn to the dictates of justice, or honour, afford no slender authority for supposing that he secretly rejoiced at the refusal of the Rohillas to execute the whole tenour of their agreement. In promoting and extending his schemes of conquest and grandeur, the Vizier must have ever been exposed to the counteracting power of the Rohillas, who were all soldiers, and so far from respecting his military capacity, they treated it with contempt and derision. The conquest of Rohilcund must have therefore naturally composed an essential part of the Vizier's general plan of aggrandizement.

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* At Ramgaut, a ford of the Ganges in Rohilcund.—Vide Rennell's map.

After his return from the Marhatta expedition, he desired a conference with the governor of Bengal, for the purpose of adjusting certain political measures. Mr. Hastings, associated with some other members of the government, was deputed to treat with the Vizier at Benares: and the principal object of the meeting was ascribed to the motive of fixing the western possessions of the English, on a firmer and more permanent basis, by some final arrangement of the territories that had been assigned to the king.

Since the period of the treaty of 1765, Shah Alum had remained at Allahabad, where he had enjoyed a splendid and a quiet retreat; but his wishes seeming to be centered in enjoying the residence of his capital, he proceeded thither in 1771;—sacrificing, at once, the substantial benefits which had been conferred on him by the bounty of the English. The King was also excited to this measure by his servants, who saw the influence of a foreign power depriving them of the common advantages of their station, and of that sway which his disposition naturally invited. The repeated solicitation of the king for troops, to establish his power at Delhi, were not acceded to in a manner that promised any success: he procured two native battalions that had been maintained by him at Allahabad, but without the complement of European officers; and this party, with about 20,000 irregular troops, commanded by Najeb Khan, arrived in the latter end of the year 1771, at Delhi*.

THE principal events of the life of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, being slenderly connected with the history of Shah Alum, an occasional reference to it is only necessary; and it may here be observed, that the measures of an Indian court, too frequently operating through the many channels of deceit, or by the more daring acts of treachery, would offer little instruction to the European reader, unless they lead to decided revolutions, or affect the general system of government.

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* It is said, that the king's journey was hastened by the intelligence of Zabitah Khan's seizure of Delhi, where he committed many outrages; even, according to popular report, in the king's haram.

The Vizier did not depend upon the court of Delhi, for the success of his schemes, or the advancement of his power. He maintained however an influence there, by the agency of Ellich Khan, one of his favourite servants, who gratifying the King by opportune donations, procured the formal investiture of such territories, as the Vizier had either previously seized, or meditated the conquest of. But we are not to suppose that the possession of such instruments, which had a constant circulation, and flowed from too weak a source to act with efficacy, would essentially promote the designs of this prince.

That some parts of the treaty now entered into, between the English government and the Vizier, may be clearly understood, it is necessary to notice, that in a short time after the departure of Shah Alum from the territories which had been assigned to him, the right was judged to revert to the English government. On the King's junction with a body of Marhattas, then stationed in the vicinity of Agra, he was compelled to make a formal cession to them of the province of Corah and the districts of Currah. This surrender, to a power deemed hostile to the welfare of Bengal, afforded a plea, equally founded on the rights of conquest and good policy, to assume the relinquished territory: and the Vizier, who had with regret made the sacrifice, expressing, after the King's departure, an earnest desire of recovering the dismembered country, his request, with certain qualifications, was granted*

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* The treaty of 1773, contains little important matter, nor would I fatigue the reader with its perusal, did I not apprehend that some serious reflections will occur, in comparing it with the events of the succeeding year. It is specified, "That whereas, " in the treaty concluded at Allahabad, on the 16th of August " 1765, between the Vizier and the Company, it is expressed that " the districts of Corah and Allahabad were given to His Majesty " for his expences; and whereas His Majesty abandoned the possession of the aforesaid districts, and even has given a sunnud for " Corah and Currah to the Marhattas, to the great prejudice of " both the Vizier and English Company, and contrary to the " meaning of the said treaty; he hath thereby forfeited his right " to the said districts, which have reverted to the Company, " from whence he received them: it is therefore agreed, that the " aforesaid districts shall be put into the possession of the Vizier, " on the following conditions, and that, in the same manner as the " province of Oude, and the other dominions of the Vizier are " possessed by him: so shall he possess Corah, and Currah, and " Allahabad, for ever.—He shall by no means, or under any pretence, be liable to any obstructions in the aforesaid countries " from the Company, and the English chiefs, and exclusive of the " money now stipulated, no mention or request shall by any " means be made to him for any thing else due on this account. " This agreement shall be observed by the English chiefs, gentle-

In the conference at Benares, it was also stipulated, that the Vizier should confirm Cheyt Sing, the son and successor of Bullwunt Sing,

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" men of the council, and the Company, nor shall it be broken or " deviated from.

" CONDITIONS:

" He shall pay to the Company fifty lacks of Sicca " Rupees, according to the currency of the province of " Oude, viz.	50,00,000
" In ready money	20,00,000
" In two years after the date hereof—viz. the first " year	15,00,000
" The second year	15,00,000
S^{a}. R^{s}.	50,00,000

" To prevent any dispute arising, concerning the payment " which shall be made by the Vizier for the Company's troops " that may march to his assistance, it is agreed, that the expences " of a brigade shall be computed at two lacks and ten thousand " (2,10,000) Sicca rupees per month, according to the currency " of the province of Oude.—By a brigade, is meant as follows—

" Two battalions of Europeans,
" Six battalions of Sepoys,—and
" One company of artillery.

" The expence of the said troops shall be defrayed by the Vizier, " from the time they shall have passed the border of the province; " and exclusive of the above mentioned sum, no more on any account shall be demanded from him. Should the Company and " the English chiefs have occasion to send for the troops of the Vizier, the Company, and the English chiefs, shall also pay their " expence in the like manner.—Signed, sealed, and solemnly " sworn to, by the contracting parties, September the 7th, 1773."

in the possession of Benares, and its dependencies. The Vizier acquiesced in this measure with reluctance, and marks of extreme disgust: not that he wished to deprive this chief of his possessions, but he was averse to a foreign interference in behalf of a person whom he considered his immediate vassal, and who, by obtaining so strong a support, would naturally deviate from that state of subordination in which such landholders are placed, under an effective Mahometan government. Shujah-ud-Dowlah, though accomplished in his manners, and endowed with an address that distinguished him among the politest of his countrymen, could not suppress the indignation he felt, at the English Governor's desire to have Cheyt Sing seated in his presence. But the Vizier was then preparing a suit * of such an importance to his schemes, that had his resentments been keener, they would have been sacrificed to its accomplishment.

That he might the more effectually prevent English merchants or their agents from residing or negociating in his country, the Vizier obtained permission at this time to impose large duties on the importation of Bengal, and European merchandize. He had witnessed the

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* A supply of troops for the conquest of Rohilcund.

rapacious monopoly which the servants of the Company had exercised in Bengal, and knew that many of the calamities which had befallen that country, might be justly ascribed to the European assumption of its commerce, which had been conducted on terms so partial to themselves, that almost every other trader was obliged to purchase an European name to cover his property. It is said, that when Shujah-ud-Dowlah has been solicited to receive an English merchant into his country, he has offered him an immediate sum of money, rather than risk the admission of a system that appeared wholly destructive of the true principles of trade.

On the conclusion of the Benares treaty, the Vizier carried his arms against the Marhattah garrisons in the Duab, which he severally expelled; and extended his conquests as far to the westward as the Fort of Jaunsy*. The main body of the Marhattah army having moved into the Decan, without leaving a sufficient force to maintain their Duab possessions, they fell to the Vizier without resistance. A large division of the country which he acquired in this campaign, had pertained to Ahmed Khan Bunguish, the late chief of Furruckabad, who was succeeded by his adopted son, Muzzuffer Jung; a youth, whom the Marhattas soon stripped of his most valuable districts. The Vizier, to induce the neutrality of the Patans of Furruckabad, during his Duab expedition, promised, in the event of the Marhatta expulsion, to restore to Muzzuffer Jung, all the territory that had been possessed by Ahmed Khan. That the conduct of an Indian prince, in pursuit of a favourite object, or in the gratification of his ambition, may be specifically viewed, I will insert the Vizier's treaty with Muzzuffer Jung, in which is seen a solemn protestation made to God, the most endearing terms of friendship and affection pledged to man, boldly used as the instruments of treachery and dishonour. The ceremony of an oath is esteemed amongst the present race of Mahometans, a shallow trite artifice, and is only adopted by those, who, from a want of stronger resource, are driven to the necessity of adopting secondary aids.

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* Jaunsy stands on the western extremity of the Kalpy territory. See Rennell's map.

THE treaty sets forth, "That, in consequence
" of the friendship that has for a long time
" subsisted between Muzzuffer Jung, and my
" ancestors, and me, I have adopted him for my
" child. By the grace of God, I will do what-
" ever may be for his good or advantage. I
" will consider his business, his friends, and
" his enemies, as mine; and until our last

" breath, we engage for ourselves, and for our " descendants and successors, that we will " remain united.—I swear, by the Almighty " God, by his Prophet, and the Holy Koran, " never to vary or depart from this treaty, upon " condition that my beloved son Muzzuffer " Jung do adhere to it also on his part. In " witness whereof, these lines are written in the " style of a treaty. By the grace of God, " whenever the Marhattas are conquered, and " driven out of the country, and mine enemies " expelled, I will deliver up to my dearly be" loved son, Muzzuffer Jung, the territories he " formerly possessed, and which he has lost in " the war, to the Marhattas. Dated, according " to the Christian æra, January 1774."

Shujah-ud-Dowlah did expel the Marhattas from the Bungush territory; but he did not fulfil the tenour of his treaty with Muzzuffer Jung, to whom, on the success of the Marhatta campaign, he gave a small sum of money, but no part of the country which had been so solemnly promised.

The grand object of the Vizier's ambition had ripened into maturity, and was now publicly avowed:—he applied to the English Government for a body of troops, to assist in the conquest of Rohilcund; the chiefs of which, he represented, had refused to perform their engagements with him, and had ever been the inveterate enemies of his house. The Government appear to have been deeply embarrassed by the Vizier's requisition: they saw the danger of carrying their arms against a remote and warlike people, and they felt a difficulty in framing the cause of a war against a nation from whom they had received no injury. After an indecisive deliberation of some days, they consented to commit the unreserved management of the Oude negociation to the Governor. —He also expressed an aversion to extend the military operations of the English to so distant a quarter, and proposed, that a demand of such magnitude should be made for the aid required, that the Vizier would necessarily be induced to withdraw the application. Conformably to this counsel, an English brigade was tendered to the Vizier, for the purpose of promoting the conquest of Rohilcund; on the condition of four lacks of rupees being paid to the Company on the completion of the service, and the monthly subsidy of two lacks and ten thousand rupees, during the residence of the troops in his dominions. The conduct of Government does not authorize an inference that the Vizier would ultimately refuse his assent to these terms; for an order was dispatched to the factory at Patna, directing that the motions of a brigade stationed in that quarter, should, without further communication with the Presidency, be directed by the future instructions of the Vizier, who was at the same time advised of the measure that had been adopted. — The Vizier, thus powerfully aided in the prosecution of his favourite scheme, conducted his operations with celerity. The Governor had not informed the Council of the Vizier's designs on Rohilcund until the latter end of November*, yet the brigade marched in the following January, and in the short space of about three months†, the Rohillas were completely defeated in a pitched battle that was fought in the centre of their country. Near five thousand of them were killed and wounded; but the loss became irretrievable by the death of their chief, who was slain in the action. Hafiz Rhamut, though he bled in an honourable case, merited a milder fate. He had never been the enemy of the English, and he had protected Shujah-ud-Dowlah at the lowest ebb ‡ of his fortunes.

After the engagement, Fyze-ullah Khan retreated with a large party of the routed army

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[*] 1773.

[†] The battle was fought on the 23d of April, 1774, near the village of Tessunah.—For the situation, Vide Rennell's map.

[‡] Shujah-ud-Dowlah, with his family, took refuge in Rohilcund after the battle of Buxar.

to Lall Dong*, where he took post [illegible] the side of a steep hill. The Vizier, accompanied by the English brigade, invested the intrenchments of the Rohillas, who being reduced to various distress, from a confined unhealthy situation, and serving under a leader of no military talents, they proposed earnest terms of accommodation to the English commanding officer; who urged, and prevailed on the Vizier, after a long struggle, to liberate Fyze-ullah, and cede to him a certain territory in Rohilcund. This chief, before the war, held the Jaguir of Rampour, rated at five lacks of rupees; but this convention † invested him with a revenue of fifteen lacks, and the most fertile quarter of Rohilcund.

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* The northern boundary of Rohilcund.

† " Whereas friendship is established between me and Fyze- " ullah Khan.—I give unto him Rampour, and some other districts " dependent thereon, altogether amounting to 14 lacks and 75,600 " rupees yearly; and I direct that the said Fyze-ullah Khan do on " no account take into his pay above 5000 soldiers. I engage, at " all times and on all occasions, to preserve the honour of the said " Fyze-ullah Khan, and to act for his good and advantage, on the " condition, that he shall look to no other power but mine for " support; that he engages to correspond with no other state than " the English. Our enemies and friends are mutual. Fyze-ullah " Khan shall assist me with 2 or 3000 troops according to his " ability. If I go in person on any expedition, [illegible] to any part of " my dominions, Fyze-ullah Khan shall attend me; and [illegible] the [illegible] number of 5000 troops which Fyze-ullah Khan is allowed at all " times to keep up, is small, and he may be unable to bring them " all into the field with him, in such case, I will place from 2 to

FYZE-ULLAH-KHAN, having concluded the negotiation, which was wholly effected by the English officer, with whom a counterpart of the treaty was executed, that the sanction of the Company might be obtained, he paid, according to a previous stipulation, a gratuity of fifteen lacks of rupees to the Vizier. The change of the system of the Bengal government which began to operate at this time, and was hostile to the councils of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, might also have impelled him to a speedy conclusion of the Rohilla treaty.

IN the year 1783, Fyze-ullah was liberated from all military vassalage to the Vizier, on the payment of a sum of money to the English resident at Lucknow, which was applied to the service of the Bengal Government.

" 4000 men under his command, that he may join me with be-
" coming dignity: the pay of these additional troops to be found
" by me It is upon the above mentioned considerations that I
" consent to settle upon Fyze-ullah Khan the said country, and
" engage to support his interests If he continue firm in the per-
" formance of this treaty, by the grace of God, I never will be
" backward in consulting his advantage and good —He is to cause
" all the Rohillas to cross the river Ganges Sworn by the Holy
" Koran, calling God and his Prophets to witness to the perform-
" ance of these articles "

Extracted from the Bengal Records of 1774.	*Col Champion's Seal*	*Rujjeb* 1188 *Hegirah,* *October,* 1774 *A. D.*

But had Shujah-ud-Dowlah been permitted to pursue the system of policy which had been observed to the other Rohilla chiefs, Fyze-ullah would at this day have languished in poverty and dependence. Happily for this chief and the residue of his nation, who have now fertilized and made populous a large tract of country, a powerful advocate came forth in their behalf, who, though the leader of a subsidiary body, assumed, in an honourable cause, the efficient power of protection. The Vizier, in an acrimonious complaint preferred against this officer, observes, "that as it had been his absolute "determination to extirpate the Rohillas, and "for that purpose requested the assistance of "the English troops, was it not higly improper "in the commanding officer, to enter into "such a correspondence without his permis-"sion?" The Vizier had in truth resolved to destroy the Rohillas, or expel them; and this resolution shaped the whole form of his conduct during the campaign in Rohilcund. He entertained so rooted a dread of this people from their valour and haughty spirit, or perhaps a consciousness of the injuries he had already committed, that he would not permit those that were subjected to remain in any part of his dominions.

At the close of this general description of the progress of the English arms in Rohilcund, [for the aids afforded by the Vizier can scarcely claim a notice,] I will insert some observations on the tendency and effects of our engagements with the Vizier in the reduction of that territory. It is manifestly seen, that the Government of Bengal were either unacquainted with the virtue and extent of their compact with the Vizier, or that they avowedly assisted him in stripping one of their allies of his hereditary possession. It was roundly agreed to invest the Vizier with the dominion of Rohilcund, the limits of which were carried to the mountains on the north, and to the river Ganges on the west. Yet a large tract of the northern division of Rohilcund, was held by Zabitah Khan*, with whom the English were at this time in alliance, and bound by a treaty "to confirm to "him his ancient dominions, to consider him "as a dependent on their favour, and that their "friends and enemies should be mutual."

THE Vizier, previously to the invasion of Rohilcund, had brought over to his interests Zabitah Khan; who, though of the Rohilla sect, and of near affinity to many of the chiefs, united with the Vizier against the cause of his nation. But he was severely punished for his treachery, and the dishonourable connexion he had formed; for the Vizier, after the completion of the conquest, asserting that Zabitah Khan had during the war maintained a correspondence with the enemy, seized on all his territory east of the Ganges; and it remains at this day annexed to the Government of Oude.

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* The son of Najeb-ud-Dowlah.

The conduct of the Vizier also to the family of Mohubullah Khan*, evinces that every sentiment of honour and faith fell before the impulse of his ambition. This chief, who held the town and districts of Bissouly, either from having been involved in a domestic contest with those Rohilla states who appeared in arms against the Vizier, or from other motives, did not engage in the war. Before the army moved into Rohilcund, he sued the Vizier for protection in behalf of his family and property, which the prince, in strong and unequivocal terms, pledged to preserve in safety and honour. On this faith, Mohubullah Khan remained during the campaign at Bissouly; but on the Vizier's arrival at that place, he was, with his family, thrown into a rigorous confinement, pillaged of every article of value, and his women were treated with a disgraceful severity. In an address of Mohubullah to the English commanding officer, in which were also inclosed the original letters of the Vizier, granting an unreserved protection, he writes, "The Vizier has "deprived us of our country, of our riches, and "even of our honour; and, not contented with "that, he is going to send us prisoners to Fizeabad. "We desire no country, no riches, no house; "but at Bissouly are the tombs of our family— "near them, and under some shade, we beg permission to pass, as mendicants, the remainder "of our days. Relying on the Vizier's promises, we remained in this country; otherwise, we should, like the other chiefs, have "fled, and preserved our character and honour; "these, with our effects, he has taken away; "and how he has dishonoured us, is known to "all." The Vizier is said to have exercised an indecent rigour towards the female prisoners of the Rohillas who fell into his hands; and he is accused also of having violated the chastity of some women of the family of Hafiz Rhamut*. The last allegation is not supported by any substantial authority; nor indeed, are such acts of outrage common amongst the most intemperate

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* The son of Dhoondy Khan, who has been already noticed in the Rohilla sketches.

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* Shujah-ud-Dowlah was impressed with so lively a sense of indignation, at the disgrace, as well as the injustice of this charge, that he burst into tears, when he was informed that it had been believed by the English commanding officer.

Mahometans; who, however prone to other excesses, are not often seen tearing asunder the veil of the haram.

The oppressions and rapacity of the Vizier in the course of the conquest, affixed a deep stain on the English character. The vanquished naturally supposed, that the hand which had led him to victory, could have been efficiently exerted in restraining his violence. The cause specifically held out by the Vizier for making war on the Rohillas, was their withholding payment of the sum which they had offered for the service of an English brigade. It has been shewn that the brigade did not arrive in Rohilcund at a due season: for the Marhattas had, in two successive years, committed wide devastations in that country, and were leaving it when the English troops appeared. The arguments used by the Vizier, in support of the invasion, were weakly maintained, on either a principle of equity or reason: and his purposes might have been effected without the exhibition of so wretched a cloak. In countries where the paths of rectitude and honour are more precisely described and adhered to than in Hindostan, the political usage of princes does not widely deviate from the conduct pursued by Shujah-ud-Dowlah in insuring success to his schemes of ambition. But what can be urged in vindication of the English, who, to gratify a rapacious ally, and without even acquiring an adequate benefit to the state, effected the destruction of a nation, against whom they could not fabricate a specious cause of complaint?

The subject of the Rohilla war hath already been so widely dilated by those who promoted, and those who have condemned, the measure, that I am fearful of giving disgust by any further enlargement; nor does the discussion properly belong to the purpose of this essay: yet I cannot refrain from pointing at the ill policy of the English, in annexing Rohilcund to the dominion of the Vizier. The injustice of the act, with the severe effects that followed, are now admitted by most classes of men; and has imprinted a deep stain on the British name in India. The Government of Bengal, in assigning a reason for investing the Vizier with the possession of Rohilcund, asserted, that the more powerful this prince became, the greater advantage would accrue to them from his alliance. The disposition of Shujah-ud-Dowlah must have been ill known to the English, or they would not have urged so frail an argument. Jealous of authority, and insatiably ambitious, he had already felt a keen resentment at the encroachments of Bengal on his prerogative, and national power, the preservation of which had long directed the spirit of his councils, and the actions of his government. The Rohilla nation formed a weighty counterpoise to the real strength and restless temper of the Vizier, who, finding himself checked by a people naturally interested in keeping a vigilant watch over his actions, lest they should suffer by too great an increase of his power, must have been necessitated to depend on the English, to repel the encroachment or attacks of the Rohillas, and the other northern states. Our possessions in India, virtually acquired by the superiority of arms, and the eminent abilities of British officers, can only be preserved, after maintaining that superiority, by a steady adherence to the principles of justice and public faith,—virtues which did not conspicuously distinguish the last negociation with the Vizier: nor were the dictates of common policy consulted, unless the axiom becomes manifest, which even the most visionary politician would startle at, that nations may be linked together by the bonds of gratitude and friendship.

SHUJAH-UD-DOWLAH was yet employed in arranging the affairs of the conquered province, when a disorder which had for some time afflicted him, broke out with such violence, that he was obliged to retire to Fyzeabad, where he died in the month of January 1775, at the age of 46 years. His death was occasioned by a venereal tumour, that had been unskilfully treated by a French surgeon, who administered to him so large a quantity of mercury, that his strength, then nearly exhausted, was overpowered by the force of the medicine. The violence of the complaint had been removed by a professional gentleman of the brigade, who served in the Rohilla expedition; but being called into the provinces, the cure was not completed. The disputes of the Vizier and the English commanding officer, had arisen to such a pitch of inveteracy, that, though the life of the Vizier was the pledge, and ultimately the sacrifice, he would not solicit the attendance of the field-surgeon.

Shujah-ud-Dowlah died at a period when his thirst of dominion had been largely indulged, and his power had arisen perhaps to its meridian height. The new members of the Bengal Government who arrived in the preceding year*, were inimical to his public interests, and seemed even to bear an enmity to his person. The projects with which his mind teemed, would soon have matured, and produced the crisis of his fortune; when he would either have arisen into powerful independence, or sunk into a station less respectable than that now occupied by his successor. His views were disclosed with so

* 1774.

little reserve, and he personally gave such unequivocal testimony of his future designs, that his political character was arraigned by all men of discernment. He frequently told his courtiers, that after the conquest of Rohilcund, he would penetrate into the territory of the Marhattas, and take an exemplary vengeance for the ravages they had committed in Hindostàn. He evinced also an anxious desire to attain the direction of affairs at Delhi, and controul the remains of military power yet preserved to the house of Timur. But in this prospect he was thwarted by Nudjef Khan, who had the office of captain-general, and who had acquired, by his successes in the field, an extensive tract of country wholly independent of the imperial authority.

THE English had been taught to believe, that Shujah-ud-Dowlah, from a principle of self-interest, was attached to their nation; that, aware of the insufficiency of his own ability, either to increase his dominion, or resist the attacks of an enemy, he would ultimately depend on them for protection. However just their opinions might have been of the real strength and resource of this prince, it would appear that he himself held them, (especially when augmented by the conquest of Rohilcund, and other expected aids,) adequate to the accomplishment of purposes, which bore no relation to an English policy. His pride and ambition, which were excessive, had been mortified by many acts of the Bengal Government; and the restrictions imposed by the Allahabad deputation, he deemed violently oppressive, and an infringement of the treaty that had been made by Lord Clive. But, concealing his resentment with an admirable address, he diligently searched for expedients to dissolve a connection which placed him in so subordinate a condition. Shujah-ud-Dowlah had felt, and resolved to adopt, the European discipline. Exclusive of the French who were employed in forming his troops, he had solicited a supply of English officers to accomplish his purpose. But subsequently to the application, the Government of Calcutta had been new-modelled, and seeing it hostile to his interests, he refused the service of any person who held a commission in the English army. I have obtained an information, supported by documents of substantial authority, but which I am not empowered to bring forward, that Shujah-ud-Dowlah, in the last moments of his life, was actively employed in forming schemes of independence, and even pursuing measures to extirpate the English power in India. The French officers in the service of this prince, improving on his ill-humour to the English Government, represented to him that an alliance with France might be made the effectual instrument of emancipating his country from controul, and enable him to prosecute with success his schemes of conquest. The Vizier eagerly hearkened to this language, and agreed to open the negociation; but the keenness with which he commenced it, prevented his seeing the difficulties which would have obstructed its purpose. It was stipulated by the agents at Oude, that a body of French troops should land on the coast of Cambay, and marching across the upper part of the peninsula, enter the western frontier of Oude. Had the Vizier made the experiment, he would have witnessed the impracticability of the project, and the visionary schemes of these French adventurers. But a ministry of France, it is to be presumed, would have altogether rejected the measure, and have foreseen that the attempt of conveying an European force over so large a tract of country, inhabited by powerful military tribes, who entertain a common jealousy of Europeans, must have been frustrated by the surrounding impediments. The fact which is now related, stands accompanied with such a variety of corroborating proofs, that I am induced firmly to believe its authenticity. Shujah-ud-Dowlah, who felt the force of the English power both in its open and concealed directions, acted consistently with the station he occupied, in endeavouring to remove a pressure so galling and disgraceful; and had he lived until a later period, when the English nation in India was encountered by a host of assailants, and sinking under an accumulated load of intestine calamities, we might have been severely punished for having too powerfully armed the hands of this prince. His memory, I trust, will not be injured, if I place Shujah-ud-Dowlah, at the crisis adverted to, amongst the foremost of the enemies of the English; when, to the extent of his abilities, he would probably have been seen making strong exertions to wipe off his former disgrace, and gratify a private resentment.

HAVING marked the more conspicuous outline of the transactions of Shujah-ud-Dowlah, I will close it with some desultory observations on his character. In treating of the personal qualities of this Prince, it must be noticed, that they pertain to a native of Hindostan, whose mind, fettered by religious prejudices and the effects of a narrowed education, is rarely incited to the search of knowledge. The same actions which are countenanced, and even applauded by a Mahometan, would in the European world be often viewed with disgust, or fall under a severe reprehension of the law. Under this preliminary sanction, it may with justice be said that the Prince who has been the subject of this treatise, possessed a penetrating understanding and an active mind. His disposition, when no grand object interposed, had a general tendency to promote the welfare of his subjects: and he was always averse to acts of barren cruelty.

In the year 1765, Shujah-ud-Dowlah's revenue did not amount to more than one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, and his army had been so much reduced by the effects of the defeat at Buxar, that it was incapable of defending his territory; yet at the expiration of ten years, the period of his death, he held a dominion which produced a revenue of three hundred and sixty thousand pounds; and he maintained in his service, one hundred thousand fighting men. When it is admitted, that in the acquisition of dominion, in maintaining an important station amongst the states of India, and in the salutary government of his country, this Prince displayed an enlarged genius, it must also be allowed, that he derived a real strength, and a large portion of political consequence, from the intimate connection he had formed with the government of Bengal; over which, he seemed, at one period, to have exercised a prevailing influence. Had Shujah-ud-Dowlah dissolved his English alliance, the security of his country, and the execution of his schemes, would have chiefly depended on the force of his army, and the ability of his officers; for he himself was not endowed with the genius of a soldier. He wanted that valour, or courage, which is ever shewn in the event of common danger, and at every season which requires its exertion: but when personal strength, or skill, was to decide the combat, Shujah-ud-Dowlah had few equals. He rode, without fear, the most unruly horses; he would attack with the sword, matchlock, or the bow, in the use of which weapons he was wonderfully expert, the most furious animal of the field.—This species of courage he seems to have acquired from his skill in the use of arms, and in the strength and activity of his body. In situations of indiscriminate danger; as in the day of battle, he is said to have been deficient in the ordinary exertions of fortitude. Though Shujah-ud-Dowlah was the ostensible conductor of the Rohilla war, he evinced throughout the campaign a marked pusillanimity; and in the engagement with Hafiz Rhamut, who like a brave soldier had occupied the foremost rank of the battle, Shujah-ud-Dowlah, sheltering himself in the rear, is accused of betraying evident signs of fear, which were not wholly effaced, until he saw the severed head of the Rohilla chief.

Like the men of rank in Asia, he was courteous and affable, had an insinuating address, and accomplished manners. These qualifications, united with a large well-formed person, and a handsome countenance, gave him powerful advantages, as well in his intercourse with foreign agents, as in the administration of his own government. With a soothing flow of language he could calm the most outrageous claimants, who, though aware of the futility of the language, seldom left his presence but under the impression of a momentary pleasure. He had acquired an extensive knowledge in the practice of every species of deceit, and he could perform with facility every character that was necessary to conduct. the various purposes of delusion or treachery. Though capable of executing the subtlest scheme of intrigue, he was subject to occasional emotions of anger, which have frequently clouded his countenance at seasons when they were hostile to his views. In his family, he performed the duties of a mild, indulgent parent, and a kind master. When an object of policy called for pecuniary distribution, he could lavish with a liberal hand; but generosity did not form a fixed part of his disposition: He was equally rapacious in acquiring, as sordid in preserving wealth. Shujah-ud-Dowlah's excesses in venery, which knew no controul, led him to commit actions derogatory from his station, as well as pernicious to his health; and even when his disorder had produced an irrecoverable stage of disease, he continued to indulge in a promiscuous use of women. His haram was filled with wives and concubines, to the number, it is said, of eight hundred, from whom were born to him fifty children.—Mirzah Arnany, afterwards intitled Asoff-ud-Dowlah, was the eldest legitimate son, and succeeded to the entire dominion of Oude without tumult or opposition.

CONTINUATION OF THE LETTERS.

LETTER IX.

Bellaspour, 22d February, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

BEFORE I leave our Indian world, let me, through you, make an acknowledgement for the many cordial marks of friendship, and the kind assistance, I have received, throughout every station in the provinces. The gentlemen of Bengal have been long noted for their hospitable conduct to strangers; and in mine own instance, I can testify that they amply merit the commendation. The reward due to a disposition so happily framed, they enjoy to a large extent; they experience those heart-felt pleasures which arise from the exercise of humane and liberal offices, and which ever convey an abundant recompence for the inconveniences sustained in their gratification.—Having discharged, to the best of my ability, this indispensable duty, I proceed to give you an account of my journey hither.

On the 8th of February, I left Rampour, and arrived at Moradabad—ten cosses. This town, standing on the banks of the river Ramgunga, is situated in the Vizier's country, which is separated from the districts of Fyze-ullah, a few miles to the north-west of it, by the river Ramgunga. Moradabad was once a place of distinction; but like many other places which once came under that description in Hindostan, is at this day greatly decayed. Having frequently seen rupees of the coinage of Moradabad, and those of a very general currency, I apprehend that an extensive mint has been established at this place. A hot bath is now amongst the few remains of its grandeur, in which, with great ceremony, I performed the Mahometan ablutions; being received amongst my new brethren, as a Moghul officer, employed in the Vizier's service.

Early on the next morning, I left Moradabad, and arrived, under an intensely hot sun, at the village of Aumruah—twelve cosses. On the day of my departure from Rampour, I had a complete view of the lofty range of northern mountains, whose summits are covered with perpetual snows: they extend nearly in a parallel from east to west, and form, I should imagine, the northern barrier between Hindostan and Thibet. To know the opinion of the people concerning this extraordinary appearance, I enquired of a fellow traveller, the cause of so conspicuous a whiteness. He said, that it proceeded from a particular sort of clay, with which the hills in that quarter were covered. I soon perceived that the task of explaining the real cause would have been equally arduous with an attempt of making him acquainted with the properties of the magnetic needle; so, expressing my surprise at the singular quality of the earth, I left him, flattered, no doubt, with the importance of his communication. The most striking object to be seen at Aumruah, is the body of a notorious robber, which, suspended by the heels from a tree, affords an useful spectacle of terror. Travelling is by no means attended with danger in this part of India, as may be proved by my example: for in no part of the roads from Benares to this place, though chiefly alone, did I meet with impediment or ill usage; and I should hold myself guilty of an injustice, did I not unreservedly declare, that the inhabitants treated me with civility, and, usually, with kindness.

On the 11th, at Chandpour — 12 cosses. Finding the want of a servant subjected me to various inconveniences, especially from the dislike of the Serauce-keepers to rub down my horse, which is, I believe, the only scruple they entertain, I took into my service an old soldier, who by his own story had been engaged in many a fell encounter: nor did his figure belie it, for, amongst the numerous desperate marks of his profession, he bore one on his face which had wholly excavated the right eye.

On the 11th, at the village of Burroo—twelve cosses. This place affords no public accommodation for passengers: but the pompous language of the old warrior, who intitled me a Moghul officer of the Vizier's, going to join the army then forming against the Sicques, procured a hospitable reception; nor did he fail to reap the advantage of our borrowed character.

On the 12th, at Najebabad—eleven cosses. Najeb-ud-Dowlah*, who built this town, saw that its situation would facilitate the commerce of Kashmire, which having been diverted from its former channel of Lahore and Delhi, by the inroads of the Sicques, Marhattas, and Afghans, took a course through the mountains at the head of the Punjab, and was introduced into the Rohilla country through the Lall Dong pass. This inducement, with the desire of establishing a mart for the Hindoos of the adjacent mountains, probably influenced the choice of this spot; which otherwise is not favourable for the site of a capital town, being low, and surrounded with swampy grounds. About a year after the death of this chief, the fort of Majeb Ghur, which is contiguous to the town, was attacked by the Marhattas, who had compelled Shah Alum, the reigning emperor, to accompany their army. The garrison made a good defence, and would not, it is said, have surrendered, had Zabitah Khan, the son of Najeb-ud-Dowlah, then lying in the nighbourhood with a respectable force, moved to its assistance. But without offering to face the enemy, or throw any relief into the fort, he crossed the Ganges, and sought shelter in Ghous Ghur. Since that period, or rather since the death of its founder, Najebabad has fallen from its former importance, and seems now chiefly upheld by the languishing trade of Kashmire.

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* The chief who has been already mentioned in the Rohilla tract.

A SMALL karavanserah, the only one in the place, being occupied, I thought myself fortunate in getting admittance into a cook's shop, where kabaubs * and stewed beef were dressed in savoury taste, and all the news-mongers, idlers, politicians, and disbanded soldiers, of the quarter, resort.—Whilst I was eating my mess, a boy came in and asked, if any tra-

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* Meat minced and dressed in the manner of what culinary language calls *forced-meat balls*: but *kabaub*, in a general sense, is any roasted food.

vellers were going to Jumbo, or Kashmire, as the kafilah* would depart on the next day. On enquiring particularly into the state of this intelligence, I learned, that about one hundred mules, laden with raw silk, and cotton cloths, and ordinary callicoes, for the Jumbo † market, had already moved to the skirts of the town. Having been furnished with a letter to a banker at Najeb Ghur, who has the general charge of dispatching kafilahs, I was introduced by him to the merchants, who received me without hesitation. When interrogated on the score of my business, I described myself as a Turk, going to Kashmire to purchase shawls. The Turkish language being in these parts wholly unknown, and as traders of various nations often carry into Kashmire bills, or specie only, my story obtained a general credit. After a mature consideration of the personal qualities of my servant, which, poor fellow, had been much impaired by time and adverse fortune, they were condemned as altogether unfit for the service that lay before us; and one of the passengers illnaturedly observed, that a man should have all his eyes about him who attempted to penetrate into Kashmire. To fill up this vacancy (for, dreading the difficulties of the journey, he himself expressed a reluctance to proceed,) I had the good fortune to obtain a Kashmirian, who was at all points qualified for my purpose. He had travelled through a great part of India and Afghanistan, and I soon discovered, that, together with an infinite resource in every embarrassment, he possessed a fund of curious history, which he did not fail to embellish with a large share of humour and vanity. But I will sum up his eulogy, and at once tell you that he was, take him for all in all, one of the best servants I had ever known; and could I have acquired the art of qualifying a rather too redundant share of acidity and warmth of disposition, he would have proved a treasure to me. Being well versed in all the scheme of an Indian journey, he made the necessary preparations, and took on him every trouble; so I could now freely indulge my pleasures, which centered chiefly in hearing and telling stories, and smoaking my pipe.

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* Karavan.—*Kafilah* is the term peculiar to India and Persia.

† A town situate about 200 miles to the S.E. of Kashmire.

On the 14th, at Ramnaghur—nine cosses. This village is in ruins, but having a large well of water, it is usually made the first northern halting place from Vajzibabad.

On the 15th, at Lall Dong—eight cosses. The station where Fyze-ullah, as has been noticed, took post after the Rohilla battle.—Lall

Dong is the northern limit of this side of the Vizier's territory, which is separated from Siringnaghur by a rivulet. A detention at this place for the adjustment of some kafilah accounts, gives me an opportunity of drawing a sketch of the surrounding objects, and the œconomy of a karavan.

The country from Najeb Ghur to this frontier is chiefly a waste, over-run with low wood, and is ill supplied with water, there being none in the space from Ramnaghur to the neighbourhood of Lall Dong. The inhabitants say,* that in the time of Najeb-ud-Dowlah, the land now overgrown with wood, was a cultivated plain; but such is the precarious state of the native territories of Hindostan, from the inert disposition which, with little deviation, pervades the body of the people, that its welfare must largely depend on the ability and executive talents of one man; and, a succession of able rulers being a rare event in the history of nations, we are not to wonder at the ruinous state into which many of the most valuable provinces of Hindostan have fallen. But on the other hand, the efforts of an active prince, are ever followed by rapid success. Habitations are, at a moderate expence, speedily erected, and the implements of agriculture are of so simple and easy a construction, that most husbandmen, with a very small help of an artificer, can make their own machines.

THE greatest extent of plain, and that was limited, lying on the north side of the rivulet, the kafilah encamped on the Siringnaghur quarter, where we were all seen busily engaged in preparing for the ensuing journey of three days, which lay through a forest. The weather during the day, growing now extremely hot, it was necessary to provide some covering in substitute of a tent. I therefore made a purchase of a large black kummul, or blanket, which being slantingly extended over a slight bamboo frame, composed of a ridge pole upheld by two supporters, and fastened below by small pins, formed a commodious and portable lodging. My baggage, corresponding with the strength of my horse, was composed of a thin mattress, a quilt, a canvass portmanteau, containing a few shifts of linen, which supplied also the place of a pillow, and the aforementioned kummul. These necessaries, with an oil bag carried by the Kashmirian, afforded a sufficient accommodation; nor should any person travelling in my manner, have more equipage.—A larger will raise unfavourable conjectures, and subject him to frequent investigation, delay, and taxes.

On the 22d, the kafilah moved, and penetrating six cosses, through the mountains, by a north-west course, halted for the benefit of its water, near a small stream.—In this day's journey, I had many occasions of seeing that our mules* were strong and sure-footed. It was wonderful to observe the ease and dexterity with which these animals, heavily laden, clambered up steep and rugged paths. The proprietors of the goods, chiefly residents of Benares, Lucknow, and Furruckabad, had appointed agents to accompany the kafilah, who are not the ultimate venders of the merchandize, but contract to deliver it, and pay the different duties, at some destined mart. To shelter the packages from the inclemency of the weather, a small complement of tents is provided, as it rarely happens that a kafilah halts at any inhabited place. A plentiful supply of water, and a plain for the accommodation of the cattle, is all that is sought for. The carriers say also, that a plain more effectually secures them against theft.

On the 23d, proceeded 9 cosses further into the forest, and halted near a large water-course. This day an occurrence happened which involved me in a serious difficulty. The intense

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[*] They are brought into the northern parts of India, from Afghanistan.

heat of the weather, and the fatigue of walking over a tract of deep sand, induced me, after passing it, to indulge in my pipe. During this regale, which I enjoyed under the shade of a tree, the kafilah had gone out of sight.* The ground in front being thickly covered with leaves, no appearance of a road was discernible; and my horse, when I mounted, was so much alarmed, that he would not, but with great reluctance, move in any direction. Whether the animal, from any instinctive power, perceived the embarrassment of our situation, or that its organs of smell were sensible of the effluvia which is emitted from the body of most wild beasts, I will not presume to determine: though I was induced to ascribe its agitation to the first cause, having once been placed in a similar situation, with the difference, that no animals of prey, or of the large size, were in the neighbourhood. After traversing the forest in various directions without perceiving the appearance of tract or habitation, or the vestige of any creature, except great quantities of elephants' dung, I, at length, fell into a narrow path, which leading through a long space of woody desert, brought me to a village; whence the people with much kindness conducted me to our halting-place.

On the 24th, at Jumah,—a few scattered

houses—four cosses. This hamlet lies within a mile of the Ganges, which, there, has nearly a southern course, and is about two hundred yards broad; with a depth of water from ten to fifteen feet. About half a mile below the place of passage, is a bed of rocks, extending from the east side more than half way across the river, on which the stream breaks with some force. The Ganges doth not here, as in your more happy land, roll its tide through a country spread with fertile plains and populous villages, whose inhabitants live in peace and plenty. Here, a thick gloomy forest, tenanted only by the beasts of the field, skirts it on the eastern side; and on the other, an uncultivated flat, over-run with low wood.

On the 25th, crossed the river at the ferry of Nackerghaut, which is about twelve miles above Hurdwar; the kafilah being to remain some days at Jumah, I quitted it, and, accompanied by the Kashmirians, I joined a small party of merchants carrying cotton to the town of Nhan. The officer stationed on the western side of the Ganges for the collection of customs, laid me under a contribution of two rupees; alleging, that as I seemed to travel much at my ease, I must be well enabled to pay that sum. It was to little purpose urging that I did not possess any property on which duties could be collected, or the justice of levying a tax on a traveller. My argument was held wholly inadmissible, and that of the custom-house officer being supported by a party of match-lock men, I gave up, with decent resignation, the unequal contest. When the long roll of galling taxes imposed on other nations, esteemed more enlightened and humane than the mountaineers of Siringnaghur, is considered, we shall probably not judge the measure rigorous, which obliges those riding at their ease to contribute to the relief of a state that affords a safeguard to their persons by its salutary government.

On the 26th, arrived at the village of Khalsawala—seven cosses. The kafilah halted this day on a pleasant green plain adjoining to the village, and skirted by a wood, through which a transparent stream flowed in many a winding channel. From its alluring appearance, though the weather was cold, I was induced to bathe; and to prevent interruption, I strayed into the thickest part of the wood, which I found abounding in peacocks, and a variety of other birds, one of which resembled the common fowl, but of a smaller size, and of very active flight.

On the 28th, at Dayrah, the residence of the deputy of the Siringnaghur rajah. This small town, which is populous and neatly built, may be called the capital of the lower division * of Siringnaghur, which includes a space of level country lying between a chain of scattered hills on the south, and the larger range of northern mountains. The Sicques have an unrestrained access into these parts through the southern hills, which are broken by small valleys; and, fearing no opposition from Zabitah Khan, they can at pleasure penetrate into the lower districts of Siringnaghur. The chief resides at a town bearing the common name of the Territory; which lies, I am informed, about one hundred miles to the north, and by the east of Lall Dong. The inactivity of the present rajah has enabled the Sicques to exact from this country a regular tribute †. Of what superior courage and resource was that chief of Siringnaghur, who, in defiance of Aurungzebe, the most powerful prince of his time, protected the son ‡ of Dara, brother of the emperor, and his deadly foe, regardless of every menace! But he fell to the *sacra fames auri*, the most destructive evil, my friend, which Pandora's box let loose upon the sons of man. It hath often armed the son against the father, hath sown dissension in the marriage bed, and broken the tie of honour, and the bonds of friendship.

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* It is called the *doone*, or low country.

† Said to be four thousand rupees annually.

‡ See Bernier's account of Sipahi Sheko's retreat into Siringnaghur.

To adjust the account of the Siringnaghur customs, the kafilah halted until the 15th, when we proceeded to Kheynsapoor—ten cosses. At this place, I saw two Sicque horsemen, who had been sent from their country to receive the Siringnaghur tribute, which is collected from the revenues of certain custom-houses. From the manner in which these men were treated, or rather treated themselves, I frequently wished for the power of migrating into the body of a Sicque for a few weeks—so well did these cavaliers fare. No sooner had they alighted, than beds were prepared for their repose, and their horses were supplied with green barley pulled out of the field. The Kafilah travellers were contented to lodge on the ground, and expressed their thanks for permission to purchase what they required;—such is the difference between those who were in, and those who were out of power.

On the 6th of March crossed the Jumna, and halted on the western banks—eight cosses. It flows with a clear stream to the south-east, and has about the same breadth with the Ganges*. Fish abound in this part of the Jumna, as I myself saw: but I believe the adjacent inhabitants do not use any means of catching them. No cultivation is seen in the vicinity of the Jumna, though a spacious plain extends on the western side, and might be watered without much difficulty from the river. The Siringnaghur territory, which here terminates, is bounded on the north and the north-east, by the districts of independent Hindoo Rajahs; on the south by Oude; on the west and north-west by the Jumna; and on the south-west, by the dominions of the Sicques. From Lall Dong to the Ganges, the country forms, with little interruption, a continued chain of woody hills. The elephant, which abounds in these forests, but of a size and quality inferior to that found in the Chittagong and Malay quarters, is here only valued for its ivory. From the Ganges to the Jumna, the road lies through an extensive valley, of a good soil, but thinly inhabited, and interspersed with wood. The food of the people is wheaten bread and pease, the latter being usually made into a soup; and, believe me, that in the course of my life I never eat a meal with a higher relish. Vigourous health, indeed, daily labour, and a clear air, will recommend to the appetite worse things than wheaten cakes and pease-soup. The attempt to ascertain the revenue of a country in which I have been so cursory a sojourner, would be presumptuous. I will therefore generally say, that Siringnaghur is computed to give an annual produce of about twenty lacks of rupees. The officer on the western side of the Jumna, taxed me in the sum of two rupees; alleging, that being merely a passenger, and unconnected with any traffic from which an advantage would arise to the country, that I was taxable in myself. The same argument being held as at the Siringnaghur pass, and esteeming myself fortunate at falling under no minuter notice, I paid the fine with pleasure.

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* It is to be noticed, that I crossed these rivers at the season of their lowest ebb.

On the 7th, at Karidah — eight cosses; and on the 8th, at Coleroon — seven cosses, — hamlets of a few houses. Here two Kashmirians, a Sunassee*, myself and servant, quitted the kafilah, and on the 9th, arrived at Nhan—eight cosses; the residence of the chief of a territory of the same name; and who on the day of our arrival, made a public entry into the town after a long absence. A division of the Nhan country extends to the southward of the head of the Punjab, and bordering the country of the Sicques, they, agreeably to a conduct observed with all their weaker neighbours, took possession of it. The Rajah armed himself to recover the districts in question, but after a desultory warfare in which he acquired much military credit, he was obliged to sue for peace; nor were the conquered lands restored until he consented to remit a tribute of two thousand rupees to a certain Sicque chief. This sum you will doubtless deem trifling, and it is so in your country, where specie is plenty, and the mode of living conformably luxurious and extravagant. But amongst these mountaineers, whose manners are rude and simple, who seek for little else than the necessaries of life, which are produced to them in great abundance, this amount is important, and to collect it, requires even oppressive exertion.

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* The name of a Hindoo tribe, chiefly composed of mendicants; though I have seen a Sunassee conducting an extensive commerce.

THE inhabitants, and the foreign merchants of the town, were laid under a severe contribution for the maintenance of this war; and the chief having now discovered the weight which the people can bear, it is probable that he will continue to reap the benefit of the impost, though the cause is removed. The Rajah of Nhan made an entry into his capital, not as Alexander entered Babylon, but with some dozen horsemen, sorrily clad, and very slenderly mounted. Had they indeed been better equipped, both themselves and horses would have shewn to little advantage, after clambering up at least six miles of a steep mountain, on the summit of which the small, though neat, town of Nhan stands. This chief, a handsome young man, of a bright olive complexion, and taller than the middle size, was dressed in a vest of yellow silk, and a red turban; and he was armed with a sabre, a bow, and a quiver of arrows. Though he has made them groan with exactions, he is a great favourite of the people. But he is young and brave, and he liberally disburses what he extorts. The joy invariably expressed by the crowds who came to congratulate his safe return, gave me a sensible pleasure. They saluted him without noise or tumult, by an inclination of the body, and touching the head with the right hand: hailing him at the same time their father and protector. The chief, whilst passing, spoke to them in terms affectionate and interesting, which, like a stroke of magic, seemed in an instant to erase every trace of grievance. Such were the advantages which pleasing manners and a liberality of temper, joined to the other alluring qualities of a soldier, gave to this prince; and will, unfortunately for their subjects, give to every prince of similar endowments on the face of the earth. Would it not be more productive of the welfare of mankind, that, instead of these clinquant virtues, a despotic ruler possessed a disposition thoroughly impregnated with vice; that with his tyranny, he united cowardice and envy, avarice and arrogance? The subjects of such a prince, would be the sooner impelled to break the disgraceful yoke, and, by a successful example, promote the general cause of civil liberty.

A SPECIES of fascination I find has now caught me, and I cannot quit the ground without introducing on it, which I do with a profound reverence for his memory, and entreating forgiveness of his shade for classing him in such company, the illustrious Julius Cæsar, who may be quoted to confirm the truth of the foregoing position. Cato's supposed reflection on the character of this hero, concludes with imprecating his virtues, for they had ruined his country. No fact of ancient or modern history, has, perhaps, given more literary pleasure, than the life of Cæsar; nor perhaps is any record of the ancient annals better authenticated. Had that great man restored, with peace, the liberty of his country; had Cæsar cherished the fire of the Roman senate, he would have had no parallel on earth. Yet, "if "Cæsar did wrong, he suffered grievously for "it."—An exemplary humanity, of rare growth in his day, was the native virtue of Cæsar, and is ever the genuine attendant of a great soul. The humane exercise of power throws even a lustre on characters that else would deserve our reproach; but it adorns the soldier with unsullied radiancy, and imparts to his laurels a bloom, which otherwise are viewed with horror, and exhibit only a badge of cruelty and rapine.

On the 12th, at noon, I left Nhan; and that evening, halting at the village of Saleannah, situate at the bottom of the hill, and four cosses distant from the town. In this quarter I first saw, since I left Europe, the fir tree*, and the willow, which, as in our country, delights in hanging over a stream. From the top of the Nhan hill, the plains of Sirhend present a wide prospect to the south-east, south, and south-west: the view to the northward is terminated at a short distance by snowy mountains. Little danger being now incurred from travelling in small bodies, as the mountains compose a barrier against the depredations of the Sicques or other marauders, our party from this place to Bellaspour was small. To assist my servant, I had entertained a Kashmirian trader in small wares, who accompanied me from Najeb Ghur; and he was at all times a useful and a pleasant companion.

On the 13th, at Sudowra—twelve cosses; a village on a high hill of steep ascent. The road this day led through a woody and mountainous country, abounding, we were told, with a variety of wild beasts. A tiger had newly marked our path with the impression of his feet; and being then informed that this creature always attacks animals in preference to men, I immediately dismounted, and led my poor little horse. The tiger, and I believe generally, the feline species, possess but a small share of courage, and seldom openly seizes its prey; but, lurking in concealment, attacks by surprise, and if unsuccessful, steals away into a hiding place without returning to the onset; and in contradistinction to the canine species, whose great strength lies in the jaw, the feline strike their prey with the fore-feet and talons. It is said that a tiger, having once tasted human flesh, becomes fond of it, and gratifies his appetite when it can be done without encountering any conspicuous danger. Yet it would appear, that all animals have a dread of man, which proceeding from the novelty of his appearance, or perhaps some instinctive fear of his powers of offence, prompts them, when not furious with hunger, to shun the contest.—This evening, I was comfortably lodged in the front of a Hindoo retail shop, where an excellent mess of pease and wheaten cakes was served up to us. Pray excuse me for noting this domestic concern, which is to me of great moment; for by such wholesome meals, my strength was unimpaired, and my daily progress made with vigour. Covered quarters during the night was what we anxiously sought after, but did not always obtain. The Hindoos, though hospitably disposed to travellers, are averse to admitting Mahometans, whom they hold unclean, into any part of their houses.

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* That species of it called the Scots fir.

On the 14th, at Lawasah — six cosses; — a few scattered houses. This day's journey consisted in climbing steep mountains; and though my little horse was as active as a goat, I was obliged, from the almost perpendicular height, to walk the greatest part of the way. For the benefit of such travellers who may come within your knowledge, and be disposed to pursue my track, you must inform them that the shopkeeper at Lawasah is a great rogue, a noisy wrangler, and mixes a great quantity of barley with his wheat-meal. As he is the only man of his profession in the place, there is no remedy for the evil, but laying in a stock at Sudowra, where they will find honest treatment, and lodging to boot. Though it is not very probable that this recommendation will be of material use to the honest man at Sudowra, yet I feel a pleasure in mentioning his goodness to me.

On the 15th, at Coultie—nine cosses;—two or three scattered houses. The Nhan country is bounded here by the small district of Bojepour, which depends on the Bellaspour chief.—On the 16th, halted on the banks of a nulla—seven cosses. Met on the road a Kashmirian family, consisting of a goldsmith, his wife, and some children, who were travelling to some town on the borders of Thibet, where they intended to settle.

ON the 17th, at Kunda, a small village—eight cosses, and about five miles to the north-west of Durmpour, the residence of the chief of a small district, generally subject to the authority of the Bellaspour government. At Durmpour I paid a duty of two rupees for passing my horse.

ON the 13th, at Gowrah,—nine cosses. I halted during the heat of the day near a water-mill, the first I had seen in India. It was constructed on the principle of the like machine in Europe, but of more simple mechanism and coarser workmanship. About two o'clock in the morning, I observed an eclipse of the moon, the body of which continued partially shaded for near two hours. In the evening, our little party went to a farmer's cottage, where we solicited permission to lodge our baggage, and to sleep under one of his sheds. The farmer candidly said, looking stedfastly in my face, which he seemed not to like, that he was apprehensive that an out-side lodging would not satisfy us. It was with much difficulty he would believe that we had sought his house only for shelter, and it was not until the Kashmirian had shown him some small wares for sale, that we were suffered to occupy the front of his house. The districts of Hundah and Gowrah, are denominated the Barrah Tukrah*, being certain portions of territory bequeathed by a chief of Bellaspour to his younger son, some fifty years ago. These petty states are ill governed, and it is only among them that the traveller, from the Ganges to Kashmire, incurs the risk of being pillaged.

On the 19th, at the village of Taynaghur—ten cosses. On the 20th, at Bellaspour—twelve cosses, the residence of the Ranee or female ruler of the Kalour territory. This town stands on the south-east side of the Setloud or Sutludge, the most easterly of the five rivers, from which the name of Punjah † is given to the tract of country extending from Sirhend to the Indus. The Setloud, a very rapid stream, is at this place about one hundred yards broad. Bellaspour is a well-built town, and exhibits a regularity not often seen in these parts. The streets are paved, though rather roughly; and

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[*] A term in the Hinduee, signifying twelve portions.

[†] A Persian word, signifying five waters.

the houses, constructed of stone and mortar, have a neat appearance. Kalour is bounded to the northward by the Kangrah districts; to the eastward by a large tract of country called Busseer; to the southward by Nhan; and to the westward by the Punjab; and its revenue is said to amount to twelve lacks of rupees. On my arrival at Bellaspour, I found the Ranee engaged in a war with the chief of Kangrah, on the limits of whose country her army was then encamped. It may not edify or perhaps entertain you to know the cause of this fell dispute, which however had taken such possession of the minds of the mountaineers, and to them was so important an event, that they seemed to think the hills and forests of Bellaspour the seat of universal war. The siege of Troy, and the conflicts on the Scamander, would have appeared as mere skirmishes to these sylvan heroes; and they probably would have allowed no other degree of comparison, than that women were the cause of them both. But as I myself became involuntarily interested in their story, and having little other matter to communicate, I am induced to intrude a sketch of it on your patience.

To deduce this eventful matter *ab ovo*, I must call your attention to the days of Acbar, who is said to have been the first Mahometan prince who reduced the northern mountains of Hindostan to the obedience of the empire. Towards the northern limit of Kalour, is a strong hold on an eminence, called the Kote Kangrah, the reduction of which detained Acbar, who commanded the expedition in person, a whole year, according to the tradition of this quarter. To reward one of his officers who had signalized himself in this service, he bestowed on him the captured fort, with a considerable space of adjacent territory. The descendants of this chief, who are of the Sheah's sect of Mahometans, continued in the possession until the present period, when the Rajah of Kangrah, on some pretence, laid the districts waste, and besieged the fort. Unable himself, to repel the enemy, the Mahometan solicited the aid of the Bellaspour Ranee, who, with the spirit of a heroine, afforded speedy and vigorous succour to her neighbour, whose cause she has already revenged by plundering and destroying almost every village of Kangrah; the chief of which now vainly asserts, that the Ranee, seeing his country destitute of defence, seized, under the colour of assisting her ally, the occasion of augmenting her own power.

HALTED on the 21st and 22d, at Bellaspour. These wars did not a little derange our measure of progress, especially as there was attached to the Kangrah army, through which we must necessarily pass, a body of Sicques, who had impressed, with a lively terror, even this sequestered region. The two Kashmirians, now my only associates, were averse to any motion until we should be reinforced. After much entreaty, they consented to accompany me to the Bellaspour camp, where the probability of meeting passengers going to the northward, they were obliged to confess, was greater than in the town. But to a rooted indolence, the common want of enterprise presides over all the actions of an Indian; and here let me observe, that our principal superiority over them, will largely consist in attacking this weak side. The prompt decision of our councils, the vigour of action, must in every contest with them command success. This constitutional inactivity and languor of the mind, have been farther promoted by the creed of predestination and astrology. A minute attention is shewn by the natives of India to certain days, hours, and minutes. On the commencement of any service, or in the performance of even the ordinary duties of life, their conduct is regulated by the immediate period; and should the calculator discover a reluctancy, or desire of delay in his employer, or apprehend that his own reputation might suffer in the event, he usually lays a bar on the undertaking. Over such men what advantage do we not possess? Yet in some of the late military transactions of India, we have weakened our claim to those natural and acquired powers, which English soldiers in most of their actions have displayed in this country. Do not misconstrue the tendency of this digression, and mark me as an abettor of the incursions and depredations which we are occasionally used to make on the lands of our neighbours. Our conduct to one[*] of them has been as unjust as it was unwise, nor do I know whether to attribute the favourable conclusion of the event[†] to good fortune, or to the folly of our enemies.

On the evening of the 23d, crossed in a ferry-boat, the Setloud, a narrow, deep, and rapid river, full of windings, and halted at a small village opposite to Bellaspour, though the distance from the ferry was nearly two miles from the town. A Tumboo-shall kafilah had encamped on the north side of the town on its way to Delhi and Lucknow, with the proprietors of which, or rather their agents, I formed an acquaintance; and through their influence with the collector of the customs I was permitted to pass without obstacle. This assistance was the more opportune, as the Bellaspour government is deemed jealous and oppressive. The collector extended his favour even to a length that I had not expected, for he not only expedited my passage through the Bellaspour districts, but gave me a recommendatory letter to his brother, who was the manager of the Kangrah custom-house. The people of the Tumboo kafilah were desirous of knowing my story, and you also, perhaps, would wish to be informed of the present one, certain parts of which, on hearing that the Turkish language was spoken by a person of the party, I compiled for the use of the day. God only knows, my friend, what a varied multiplicity of fictions I have formed in the course of this journey: and I have to supplicate his pardon for the fabrication, as well as to hope for your acquiescence in the necessity. The tenour of my story sets forth, that I was by birth a Turk, and had come when young to India, where I was taken into the house of a person of distinction who had brought me up. That from my long residence in India, I had forgotten my native language, and that my profession had been chiefly that of a soldier, which quitting on a disgust, I had collected my little property and become a travelling merchant. The story, not very complex, possessed plausibility sufficient to procure common belief, and I myself had entered so warmly into its spirit, that I began to believe it. I must here inform you, that having been seen two or three times writing on the road, I was told by one of the passengers that is was an European custom, and a very useless one. The remark alarmed me, but I told him without much hesitation, that I had been always accustomed to write my current expences, that at the end of the year I might ascertain the amount, and not exceed my income. My remarks were usually noted in a rude Persian character; but whilst I was writing an English letter from this place, a Kashmirian who was sitting near me, and who had formerly served on board one of our country ships, observed, that I wrote from the left to the right in the European manner: but on being told that the Turks used the same method, he seemed satisfied. From an inattention to one of the forms of my new character, instead of sitting down, as the Asiatics invariably do in the performance of urinal evacuation, I used occasionally to stand upright; and being severely reprehended for this uncleanliness, I alleged that the habit was not uncommon amongst soldiers, who from the hurry of service, and their dissipated course of life, make many deviations from the rules of decorum. But the want of penetration, or the good humour in which we lived together, has prevented my companions from seeing through my disguise, which I now entertain sanguine hopes of preserving to the end of my journey.

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[*] The Marhattas.

[†] The convention of Wargaum, which covered us with disgrace.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours, &c. &c.

LETTER X.

Nourpour, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

ON the 22d of last month, I had the pleasure of describing to you my journey from Lall Dong to Bellaspour, and I can now with pleasure say, that, unhurt by the Sicques, tigers, or thieves, I am safely lodged in Nourpour, the principal town of a district of the same name. From the western bank of the Setloud, we proceeded on the 24th of March to the village of Comour Hattee,—eight cosses. An Hattee, which in the language of this country signifies retail shop, affords the best accommodation for a traveller, and I always endeavoured to make one my halting place. There I procured wheat, wheat-meal, pease, and ghee*, of which my common fare is composed, and by the applying in civil terms, the shopkeeper commonly indulged me with the use of the front part of his shop.

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* Butter boiled, in which state it is always used for culinary purposes in India.

On the 25th, in the Bellaspour army—ten cosses. It will not demand the pen of Homer to describe the different powers which formed this camp; their strength, the names and characters of their leaders, or the situation of the ground which they occupied: suffice it to say, that about 300 horses, and 8000 foot-men, armed with match-locks, swords, spears, and clubs, were huddled together on two sides of a hill, in a deep state of confusion and filth. Having resided for the space of four months in this spot under small sheds made of the boughs of trees, you will naturally suppose, that the effects resulting from the situation could neither have been pleasant or salutary. In all, were four very ordinary tents, one of which was occupied by the generalissimo, a brother, and I believe an elder one, of the late chief of Bellaspour; for the order of succession in the line of primogeniture, is not at this day strictly adhered to in India, either amongst the Hindoos, or Mahometans. This personage, from age, being incapable of performing any active duty, had appointed a younger brother to the executive command. The Ranee, with her son, a youth of about ten years of age, and a favourite Sunnassee, had retired during the war to an adjacent fort, where she directed the general operation of the war. Having entered thus far into the history of Bellaspour, I will proceed to explain some parts of the story of this lady, which, as they tend to place female conduct in a distinguished point of view, I embrace the occasion with pleasure. And here permit me to declare with a fervent sincerity, and an honourable sense of the dignity of character to which I aspire, that I am a zealous friend of women, and that as far as the offering of my mite will contribute to their aid, or to a display of their various merit, it shall be held forth with a willing hand.

Quitting these encomiums on myself rather than on the sex, I am to inform you that the Bellaspour Ranee, on the death of the late chief, which happened about three or four years ago, declared herself the guardian of her son, and regent of the country. She was opposed in this purpose by her husband's brother, the person who now commands the army; and she had also to combat the many difficulties incident in this country to her sex, the most embarrassing of which was a preclusion from public appearance; yet, baffling every attempt made to subvert her authority, she firmly established herself in the government.* The event of the

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* It has already been observed in the letter on Hindoo mythology, that amongst the Hindoos a woman on the demise of the husband becomes an inefficient member in the family; but in the present day this ordinance is often over-ruled by the intervention of

Ranee's success, brought on the confinement of her competitor; but after a short time, during which he experienced a lenient treatment, he was released. This dame of spirit, who hath evinced strong traits of a disposition fitted for conducting either military or civil schemes, and who hath hitherto been fortunate in them is at this day enthralled by the force of love. Whether this passion is to be classed amongst the alloys of our virtues, according to the doctrine of the most rigid moralists, or whether it heightens the lustre of those already possessed, and even creates good qualities in us, as the elegant Yorick has advanced, are questions submitted, with a due deference to the intricacy of the subject, to those who are skilled in the extensive passion of love. The object of this lady's favour I saw, and the choice she has made is a proof of good taste. He is a young handsome Hindoo of a religious tribe, who, contrary to the usage of his sect, which is founded on rules almost as severe as those of the Carthusians, dresses gayly, and in the Mahometan fashion. From a certain levity, though politeness of manners, set off by the delicate fancy of his apparel, you at the first glance pronounce him a favourite of the women. Such are the changes

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power, wealth, or intrigue. In this note it may not be improper to mention, that the Hindoos use the epithet "widowed," as descriptive of futility, or of any contemptible and nugatory act.

which love can produce, even amongst a people who observe their religious ordinances with a scrupulousness irreconcileable to common sense, and which in some instances border on gross absurdity*. Thus much for the Ranee of Bellaspour, to whom be all success!

I NOW learned that my progress towards the Kangrah army, would, without the protection of an escort, be attended with much risk. In order to procure so essential an accommodation, I waited on the commander-in-chief, then sitting under a banian tree, and attended by his principal officers, the greater part of them clad in native buff. Some new levies were passing in review before him, that had come in from the country, or rather the woods; for they bore a strong resemblance to the description given in heathen story of the satyrs, fawns, and other branches of the sylvan race; nor do I think that all the powers of a Prussian drill-serjeant, extensive as they are, could have impressed on them a competent knowledge of military discipline. On approaching the chief, I made an offering of a rupee, laid on the corner of my vest. You will be pleased to notice, that the piece of money is, not to be placed on the naked hand, but on a handkerchief, or some part of the garment held out for that purpose; and though the superior shall be disposed to favour the client, yet from motives of generosity or an attention to his condition, it often happens, that he does not take the offering, but touches it with his finger. The honour is then supposed to be conferred, and the hope of obtaining protection or assistance, if sought for, is entertained. The chief received me with civility, and complied with the request, that our party might be permitted to accompany the first messenger who should be dispatched into the Kangrah camp; and he also intimated that some letters which were preparing, would soon be forwarded. He looked obliquely at my offering, which he touched, but would not receive. A day or two afterwards, I discovered this mountaineer to be composed of the same materials, which, with few deviations, form the common disposition of the natives of India. On visiting him a second time, attended only by the cotewaul* (also the acting master of ceremonies), I was told that I might present my offering, which being an Alum Shahee rupee †, a coin of rather an inferior value in this quarter, I was received with a frown, and my money underwent a strict examination. Would you not imagine that I had been bargaining with a Jew pedlar, instead of conferring with the chief of a country? Though I was mortified at beholding among us so glaring a meanness and want of decorum, yet, as a trait of national character was disclosed, I received some satisfaction in obtaining so unequivocal a testimony of it. In further proof of the inconsistency of conduct, as well as a want of fortitude in the people of this country, I am induced to relate to you an event (though foreign to the immediate purpose of this letter) that came within my own knowledge. At the time when the Mahometans were driven from Kattuck, the chief of that territory fled to Bengal, where having expended the amount of the treasure and moveables that had been preserved, he went to the coast of Coromandel, and was received into the list of pensioners maintained by the Navaub of the Carnatic. During the regular payment of the allowance, this man enjoyed ease; and by the show of a palanquin, and a respectable retinue, he maintained a certain state. The provision which the Navaub at that time found it expedient to make for pensioners of a higher order, caused a deduction from the stipend of his Kattuck dependent, who then laid down his palanquin, and purchased a small horse. This was doubtless a mortifying degradation; but the cup of his sorrow was not yet full: for on a greater reduction, and at length, a total abolition of the pension, this poor man losing sight of the character he had supported, and blinded by a vanity which discouraged all industrious exertion for a livelihood, became notoriously addicted to fraud, and petty-thefts; and was scarcely saved from an ignominious end. I have quoted these examples, thinking them more conclusive in conveying to you a knowledge of character, than any speculative observation. But when the mind at an early period, is not accustomed to behold and admire examples of integrity and honour, or taught to shun with horror and contempt the habits of vice; on the contrary, when the instruction given to youth, tends to appreciate the duties of life by the performance of futile ceremonies, and the study of legends pregnant with fable, or violent prejudices, we are not to wonder at such acts of depravity.

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* In the neighbourhood of Benares is a sect of religious Hindoos, who, it is said, forbear making any use of their hands, even on the most necessary occasions; but are fed and assisted by others.

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* An officer of police.

† A rupee of the present reign.

The flies tormented me so much in the Bellaspour army, that I could not but with difficulty secure my food from their vile attacks. A certain quantity of poison I believe is contained in the body of an Indian fly; for on swallowing it, a nausea and vomiting almost immediately succeed. I had imagined that the sickness might proceed from the motion of the insect in the stomach, but on examining one after it had been discharged, I perceived it without life, though but a very short time deprived of its natural air. The intense heat of the stomach indeed, must speedily cause the suffocation of so small an animal.

OUR situation in the Bellaspour camp was disgusting and incommodious. The heat was in the extreme, with a compound of smells arising from the filth of the people, that grossly tainted the air: and I became so anxious to escape, that I had determined to embrace any mode of operation which might lead to a change of quarters. This eagerness had almost produced a measure, which probably would have caused a material failure of my plan. Two messengers who were to convey proposals of peace to the Kangrah camp, promised to conduct our party thither in safety, and I had resolved to commit myself to their charge, though much opposed by my associates, who decidedly said, that these men would betray us. The chief's chobedar*, a brother Mahometan, also endeavoured to impress me with an ill opinion of these messengers. Had they formed any scheme of mischief, it was happily frustrated on the evening previously to our intended departure, by the arrival of a drove of asses, laden with iron, who were pursuing our route. On the 29th, the joint party moved, and had arrived at the boundary of Bellaspour, eight miles distant from the camp, when our troubles came thick upon us. Two of the Kangrah horsemen appeared in front, and passing me, went towards the rear, where they plundered the ironmongers to the amount of one hundred rupees, which is accounted a large sum in these parts. They seized also on a Kashmirian, who was lagging behind, and were in the act of stripping him, when he loudly cried out, (which was not true,) that he was my servant, and that I was a person of some distinction. This intelligence induced the horsemen to follow me; but on approaching, one of them observed that I had the appearance of a *balla audimee**, and should not suffer any molestation; that only stragglers, and single travellers fell under their notice. Seeing them disposed to this civil treatment, I procured the Kashmirian's release, as also that of my own servant, who had come up during the parley, and had been likewise taken in custody. It was, I believe, a fortunate event for the prisoners that I returned, for our cavaliers were then in quest of prey, nor did they seem nice in the distinctions of persons; for whilst I remained, some stray passengers were laid under contribution, from one of whom, an ass-driver, they took a pair of shoes. We were informed that two hundred Sicques who had been lately entertained in the Kangrah service, would soon appear. Aware of the licentious manners of the disciples of Nanock [*], especially when employed in foreign service, I would then willingly have sacrificed a moiety of my property to have had the other secured. There was no other remedy than assuming the look of confidence and ease, which, Heaven knows, ill corresponded with my heart: so, pushing my horse into a quick trot, I was speedily conveyed into the midst of this formidable corps, who received me very attentively, but without offering any violence. Imagining our approach to have been that of the enemy, the Sicques were preparing for the fight, to which they loudly exclaimed, in the tone of religious ejaculation, that their prophet had summoned them. In token of respect, I had dismounted, and was leading my horse, when a Sicque, a smart fellow, mounted on an active mare, touched me in passing. The high-mettled animal, whether in contempt of me or my horse, perhaps of both, attacked us fiercely from the rear, and in the assault, which was violent, the Sicque fell to the ground. The action having commenced on the top of a hill, he rolled with great rapidity to the bottom of it, and in his way down, left behind him his matchlock, sword, and turban: so complete a derangement, I feared, would have irritated the whole Sicque body; but on evincing the show of much sorrow for the disaster, and having assiduously assisted in investing the fallen horseman with his scattered appurtenances, I received general thanks.

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* A person who carries a silver stick before men in high station.

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* In the Hindostany language, any person above the ordinary class, is so denominated.

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[*] The founder of the Sicques.

MY good fortune, which had this day repelled a series of perils, conveyed me in safety to the camp of the Kangrah, or, as he is often called, from a more ancient name of his country, the Katochin chief. We regaled ourselves this evening with great joy, having suffered from hunger as well as fatigue, though we had only travelled about sixteen or seventeen miles. A small body, chiefly of horse, was stationed at this camp; the greater part of the forces under the command of the Rajah, being employed in the siege of Kote Kangrah. The common road to Jumbo from hence, lay through Nadone, the principal town in the Kangrah country, and through the district of Huriepour; but these places being then overrun by the Sicques, we were obliged to deviate from the usual track, and proceed to the westward. It is to be feared that these turbulent mountaineers, the disturbers of their solitary abode, will stir up such commotions in their land, as to wholly shut up this road, the only secure one from India to Kashmire, or render the passage so precarious, that no advantage will compensate the risk*.

On the 30th, we moved, and joining the kafilah of the iron merchants again, accompanied it to Sooree—six cosses;—a small village, of which most of the carriers were inhabitants. The halt was made at this village from a desire of the carriers to see their families, for it was at the distance of a full day's journey out of their road. To the eastward of Sooree, which lies in a valley, we crossed a ridge of high and steep mountains.

On the 31st, at Bompal—four cosses;—a small hamlet situated on an eminence. This day's journey was made short for the accommodation of the iron merchants, who went to the Kangrah camp to attempt the recovery of the property which the Sicques had plundered; but they returned without redress, and now seemed anxious to leave the country; as, instead of procuring a restitution or payment, farther demands had been made. All this night, I was exposed to a continued and copious rain:—and here let me observe, with sincere thanks for the blessings of a hale constitution, that, though I have, in the course of this journey, endured much severity of weather, my health has hitherto received no injury.

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* This apprehension has been since verified.

A CONTINUANCE of the rain detained us at Bompal until the 2d of April, when we arrived at Chumbah—eight cosses;—a small village, depending on the chiefship of Jessoul. At a short distance from Bompal, we were stopped by the collector of Nadone, who had come three miles from his house, in defiance of the troubled state of the country, to receive from us a toll duty of a few pence. At about mid-way on the right-hand side of the road is seen a place of Hindoo worship, at the foot of which runs the Byas Gunge *, with a rapid stream of about one hundred yards broad †. A great part of the road from Bompal to Chumbah lay through a valley, watered by the Byas, on the north side of which is seen the level and fertile district of Huriepour. The territory of Kangrah, or Ktochin, is limited on the north, and north-west by Huriepour; on the east by Chumbay; on the south by Kalour; and on the west by the Punjab. The ordinary revenue, estimated at seven lacks of rupees, has been much diminished by the chief's alliance

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* The second of the Punjab rivers from the eastward.

† The current runs to the left.

with the Sicques, who spread destruction wherever they go. These marauders are now acting the part of the man whom fable represents to have been invited by the horse, to aid his contest with the boar; and you know the uses to which the thoughtless horse was applied, when victory was decided in favour of the combined forces.

THIS day, our little party, which had been joined in the Bellaspour camp by the Kashmirians, resolved, from a dread of the Sicques, who had invested the common track, to quit the kafilah, and through detached paths endeavour to reach Jumbo. A native trader of India, it is to be observed, holds his time in small estimation, and would rather halt for two or three months, than incur even a common risk.

ON the 3d, at Dada—ten cosses; dependent on the chief of Sebah. From a stream running through the village, we procured some excellent fish, of the size and something of the taste of trouts. This district, by its approach to the head of the Punjab, lies wholly at the mercy of the Sicques, who are, I think, the plainest dealers in the world. The fort of Sebah *,

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* Situate about three cosses to the south-west of Dada, and the only fortified residence I have seen among the mountains. The vicinity of the Punjab has perhaps induced the mountaineers to fortify this place

standing pleasantly on the brink of a rivulet, lay on our road; and in passing it, I saw two Sicque cavaliers strike a terror into the chief and all his people, though shut up within their fort. They had been sent to collect the tribute which the Sicques have imposed on all the mountain chiefs from the Ganges to Jumbo; and, offended at the delay of the payment, these high-spoken men were holding to the affrightened Hindoos, that style of language, which one of our provincial magistrates would direct at a gypsey, or sturdy beggar. Indeed, my friend, no ordinary exertion of fortitude, no common share of philanthropy is required, to wield with temper the rod of power; which, from the frailty of his nature, man is ever inclined to use with severity. Yet surely, when he looks into himself, he will see many a strong reason to qualify its stroke. From a spirit of impatience, which having long actuated me, I am induced to think is innate, I quitted my companions, and going about a mile in front, fell in with a horseman, who had much the appearance of a freebooter; but being well armed, and evidently the stronger man, I did not apprehend any risk from a rencounter. Seeing me a stranger, and from the quality of my equipment, a fit subject for plunder, he stopped me, and in a peremptory manner, asked my occupation, and place of abode. My answer were neither explanatory nor gracious, and my departure abrupt, though he had expressed a strong desire of farther communication; and seemed offended at the unconcern of my deportment. About a quarter of a mile farther on, I met a Sicque horseman, well armed, who was evidently in search of adventure. After reconnoitring me attentively, and apprehending, I imagine, that a contest would be of doubtful event, for my sword was long, and my countenance, by the air I had assumed, fierce, he politely saluted me, and passed. The person whom I first saw, had halted, and on the junction of the Sicque, a council was held by them on the subject of my moveables; the result of which was to return and take them from me. My companions who gave me this information, came up while these men of the blade were communing on the plan of attack, and an éclaircissement took place. They discovered that these footmen, four in number, were associates of him, whose property they intended to invade; and naturally concluded, that however decided the odds of two to one might have been, so great an additional strength to our party, would manifestly turn the chances; and, swayed probably by this forcible argument, they gave us no molestation.

On the 4th at Tulwara,—ten cosses; a village in the district of Dutar, where the Sicque chief has erected a small fort, and holds the adjacent territory. The country to the southward now assumed a level aspect, which to me had an effect inexpressibly pleasing; for my eye had long been disgusted, and, I may say, imprisoned, by mountain piled on mountain, till the highest pierced the clouds. The district of Dutar, or Dutarah, extends on the interior side of the Punjab hills, through which our late southern inclination had penetrated. In this day's journey, our party was reduced to the Kashmirian trader and myself; three Kashmirians, who had joined our party in the Bellaspour camp, went on before, and my servant lagged behind. In the evening, having reached the bottom of a hill, we observed a body of horsemen descending in our road. The sight of these men, who were immediately known to be Sicques, gave a serious alarm; and on their near approach, I deposited, unnoticed by my companions, my little property of bills and cash in an adjacent bush. But we had formed an unjust opinion of these cavaliers; and I am to think myself singularly fortunate, in being enabled in two instances to place their conduct in a favourable point of view. This party, consisting of about two hundred, many of whom were Mahometans, was then marching into the Hurriepour district. Summoning an affected composure of countenance, we affected to smoke our pipes, from which some of the Mahometans took a whiff *en passant*, and at the same time gave us an assurance of protection against any ill designs of their associates; for notwithstanding the looks we had borrowed, they must have seen much embarrassment in them. After their departure, I took my valuables out of the bush without the observance of my companion, who was transported with joy at the escape, swearing, by his beard, that on reaching our evening quarters, he would offer up to Mahomet, or to his national saint Muc-doom Saib, two-pennyworth of brown sugar, in thanksgiving for the extraordinary preservation. We met many of the Sicque stragglers, who are always the most mischievous; these we directed to speedily join their companions, who, we said, had strictly enjoined us to give such directions; and this pretended message gave us some credit; for seeing we had not been plundered by their party, they followed the same meritorious example.

A SHOP-KEEPER accommodated us with a convenient lodging at Tulwara, where, being joined by my servant, who had likewise been involved in the dangers of the day, though he had carefully preserved the remains of the fish that had been procured at Dada, a sumptuous feast was served up, and joyously participated. The truth of this remark will be readily acknowledged by those, who, from the like adventures, have reached in the evening a safe retreat. My friend, who faithfully performed the tenour of his promise, reprobated my insensibility of the providential interposition that had been made in our behalf. It was in vain to urge the merits of internal prayer, or to assert, that I had already offered unfeigned thanks for our escape, which I trusted would not be the less acceptable from the want of sugar. This being a doctrine wholly repugnant to his creed, which existed only in noisy and ostentatious ceremony, I drew on myself a further severe reproach.

On the 5th at Badpour—seven cosses; a populous village in the Nourpour district. About two cosses to the eastward of Badpour, we crossed at the Rhay Ghaut, or Puttun*, in a ferry-boat, the Byas Gungah, and came into the Jumbo road, which in this quarter has not yet experienced the depredation of the Sicques.

On the 6th, at Gungatau—ten cosses. In the passage of a rivulet near this village, the horse, in suddenly stopping to drink, threw me headlong into the water, where, among the rest of my chattels, a bill on Jumbo was thoroughly drenched: nor was this the first injury it had received.

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* The name of a ferry in some parts of the Punjab.

On the 7th, at Nourpour; the residence of the chief of a district of the same name. This town situate on the top of a hill, which is ascended by stone steps, has the appearance of opulence and industry. Towards the south-east the country is open and of a pleasant aspect, to which a winding stream of fine water gives additional beauty. Mountains that have already made my eyes ake, contract the view to the west and north; but these have their uses; and having experienced an essential one, not to give it a place would be ungenerous. The heat of the sun now growing intense, would have been severely felt, had not the wind which came from the north-west, received a cool refreshing quality from the snows which on that quarter cover the hills; and had it not been for a like favourable situation, the residence in the Bellaspour camp, the remembrance of which makes me shudder, might have proved fatal to us.

On a plain adjacent to the town of Nourpour, was encamped a Jumbo kafilah, chiefly the property of Sunassees*, and consigned to the Delhi market. From these people I learned that the chief of Jumbo was much embarrassed in his finances, from a destructive war he had entered into with the Sicques; that to raise supplies, he had levied a general contribution on the inhabitants of the city; and that his exactions had induced many of the principal merchants to abandon the place. The Sunassees had employed in their service two or three Kashmirians, who are men of an universal occupation, and endowed with unwearied patience and activity in the cause of gain. They told me that I should incur a manifest risk in going to Jumbo, at a time, when the appearance of persons of any property, attracted the notice of government: an information then more alarming, as my business at Jumbo required a personal attendance. Whilst I am writing of Nourpour, it may not be superfluous to mention, that a respectable merchant named Daud Khan, a native of the Punjab, resides in that town. He had lived many years at Jumbo, but having felt the oppression of that government, he has taken refuge in Nourpour, where he enjoys, with a moderate security of property, the benefit of a fine air, and a plentiful country; and should any of our countrymen come this way in the Mahometan character, they may be confidently assured of deriving conveniency, from an acquaintance with Daud Khan.

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* Though this sect, conformably to the tenets of their doctrine, ought to renounce or never engage in the affairs of the word, yet many of its members have become merchants, soldiers, and statesmen.

On the 8th, halted. On the 9th, at the village of Bunguree—eight cosses. My servant, from a cold and a constitutional weakness in his breast, which he said had long afflicted him, was this day scarcely able to walk. I am now fearful that the burthen he was loaded with, was too heavy a one, and I am also to accuse myself of not alleviating its weight, by an exercise of those offices of kindness, which the law of humanity, as well as the usages of servitude, especially in the Asiatic world, obliges a master to shew his servant, the more so if he is a good one; and to say that this follower of my fortunes was not a good servant, would be an unworthy attempt to exculpate, at the expence of his character, my frequent neglect. But should I ever be enabled to recompense his worth, the act shall be classed among those of my best deeds. I used to fortify my occasional dissatisfaction at him, by enlarging too rigorously on the petulance of his temper; but I hold the reason no longer valid, nor will it atone for the compunction I feel, when I recall to my mind the many affectionate services which the honest fellow performed in the course of a laborious journey.

The districts of Nourpour on the north, are bounded by the river Rawee; on the east by the Chambay * country; on the west by some small Hindoo districts, lying at the head of the Punjab, and by the river Byas; and on the south by Huriepour. The revenues of Nourpour are calculated at four lacks of rupees, and it would seem that it enjoys a state of more internal quiet, is less molested by the Sicques, and governed more equitably than any of the adjacent territories.

On the 10th, at Plassee—ten cosses:—a small village in the Bissouly district. About eight miles to the north-west of Bungurce, and opposite to the fort of Bissouly, crossed the Rawee †, which is about one hundred and twenty yards in breadth, and very rapid. In the ferry-boat were two Sicques going to the fort, of which, a detachment they belonged to, had taken possession, in consequence of being called in to the assistance of the Bissouly chief. Though this be the invariable result of every connection made with the Sicques, the infatuated mountaineers never fail to seek their aid when engaged in war. A bordering chief had invaded the Bissouly districts, plundered the inhabitants, and burned their villages, before any opposition

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* A mountainous territory of large extent.

† The Rawee is the Central Punjab river, and runs near the city of Lahore.

was made. The Sicques were called in to repel the enemy, and defend the fort of Bissouly; but after performing the required service, they became pleased with their new situation, and refused to relinquish it.

A QUICK progress through this country, and avoiding the track of the Sicques, were strongly, though unnecessarily, recommended to us. The boatman at the ferry of Bissouly, though a brother Mahometan, made an exorbitant demand of hire, which was considerably lessened by the interference of the Sicque horsemen, who saw the imposition, and had only to make known their will to effect obedience. The journey of this evening, solitary and dreary, gave a wrong bent to every spring of the imagination, which sullenly refused to receive one cheerful or pleasing idea. If such did begin to shoot forth, the prospect of a deserted village, a desolate country, immediately destroyed it, and introduced in its stead, those pregnant with the horrors and miseries of war. Great God! that the common evils of life so abundantly heaped on our heads, should not be felt as already too grievous, without the wilful encounter of additional mischiefs! This propensity in the nature of man, indicates a disposition at once destructive of the purposes which he seems designed to execute, and disgraceful to the intellects he so amply possesses.

An obliging house-keeper in the village of Plassee, accommodated me this evening more agreeably than I could have expected. His little tenement was composed of materials that had resisted the late conflagration of the country, and he had, with his family, resumed the quiet possession of it. Seeing me oppressed and languid, from the effects of a fever, which had seized me on the road, he procured me a bed, and gave me every nourishment which his house afforded.

On the 11th, at the village of Buddoo—ten cosses; the residence of a petty chief, tributary to Jumbo. This day an annual fair was held at an adjacent hamlet, which being near our road, we mixed with the numerous spectators of the festival. The good humour and mirth accompanying this meeting, exhibited a strong contrast to the scene of yesterday, and described, in lively colours, the various bounties which flow from peace. Among the diversions of the day, I observed the wheel with boxes suspended from its rim, of common use in the southern parts of India, for whirling round those who are disposed to make such aerial circuits. More than once have I taken my seat in one of those whirligigs, and can assure you, that the entertainment, though not of a sober kind, has its pleasures; and, what is more than you can say of many a pleasure, it sets you down where it took you up. My servant did not arrive this evening, and from having hitherto wholly relied on his services, I sustained a great inconveniency. But a Kashmirian family at Buddo, on the score of an acquaintance with my companion, in a certain degree relieved it, by giving us a friendly reception, and a slender supper.

On the 12th at Mancote—eight cosses. A chief depending on Jumbo resided at this village, which stands on an eminence partially skirted by a small river. Here my troubles branched out anew, and though not deserving a rank in the list of misfortunes, involved me in various difficulties. My Kashmirian associate having by mistake proceeded beyond our place of rendezvous, there was no one to prepare my victuals, or to take care of the horse. Though the Hindoos hold in abomination the performance of any menial office for strangers, yet the shop-keeper at Mancote, from whom I had purchased the necessaries of the day, afforded me great assistance. He gave me house-room, a bed, and also some of his household utensils, for holding the horse's corn, and my own provision. From an association with those who had obviated my various wants, and had even rendered the journey a pleasant one, I was at once deprived of all help. In the first place, I cleaned and fed my horse, nor did he deserve less at my hands; for he was a good-tempered, sure-footed, active animal. Had he not indeed been thus qualified, he could not have supported such fatigue, or have clambered over the steep and rocky mountains that had hitherto stood in his way. After this care, it was necessary to remedy the state of my own wants, which became urgent and clamorous, for I had not eaten any thing that day.

BEING told that a mendicant Seid* of eminent sanctity resided in the upper part of the town, I presented myself to him, told my story, and earnestly intreated his aid. I had imagined that the man who lived on public benevolence, whose welfare in the world was promoted by a common exercise of humanity, would have cheerfully come forward to my succour, especially as the request had no tendency to touch his property. But I reckoned without my host. Never did mitred priest in all the plenitude of his power, rolling amidst the pluralities of benefice, regard a meagre curate with a deeper contempt of eye, than did this haughty descendant of Mahomet receive my supplication. Simply setting forth the loss of my servant, and the inability to supply his place, I requested that he would direct his people to prepare for me a meal, the materials of which were all in readiness. This language had no effect on the Seid, who confiding, I suppose, wholly in the efficacy of faith, had exploded from his creed the doctrine of good works: or, considering perhaps the trade of begging to be a monopoly of his order, he wished to expel and discourage all interlopers. After warmly expatiating on the difficulties that surrounded me, throwing in also some strictures on his conduct, he grumbled an assent, but with an express proviso that I should produce fire-wood. I could as easily have brought him a bulse of diamonds as a stick, for it was then dark, and indeed hunger and fatigue had made me incapable of exertion. Turning from him with indignation, I loudly reprobated his violation of what even the rudest Mahometans hold sacred, the rights of hospitality; a ready performance of which, he ought to know, was earnestly enjoined, and that the Divine vengeance was peculiarly denounced against all who transgress its law. This exclamation, delivered with heat, roused the attention of his adherents, one of whom desiring me to be pacified, proposed to adjust the embarrassment. He carried me to the house of a singing girl, who, on learning the story of my wants, tucked up her garment with a smiling alacrity, and commenced the business of relieving them without delay. It would have made your heart glad to have seen this honest girl baking my bread and boiling my peas, she did it with so good a will; frequently observing, that I had conferred an honour upon her, and that the present service was but a small return for the many favours she had received from those of my class. Will not you judge the declaration of her refusing all donation, an Eastern hyperbole? Yet I affirm to you that it is a genuine story, and were Mancote at no further distance from Lucknow, than Shieck Seray *, you might procure, from this honest girl, a testimony of its truth.

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* The descendants of Mahomet are so denominated.

On the 13th I arrived at Mansir—eight cosses. The country now became more open, and the valleys better cultivated than any I have seen to the westward of Bissouly. The journey this day was pleasant, and what in my proceeding was extraordinary, I did not deviate from the road, though alone. In passing near an encampment of beggars, (a merry troop they were) they desired me to alight and take some refreshment: the invitation was thankfully accepted, and I partook of a coarse but cordial

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* This place is about six miles distant from Lucknow.

meal, which was served up with frequent professions of welcome.—Mansir is composed of a few houses, standing on the margin of a beautiful sheet of water, which is abundantly supplied with fish; but being held a sacred or royal property, they live unmolested. The lands of Mansir were appropriated, by a former chief of Jumbo, to the maintenance of certain Byragees*, who in this delicious spot seem to enjoy every pleasure which men in India can taste. But here I am checked and called upon to crave your pardon, for these solitary sectaries have precluded women from their society; and to say that any portion of life, however replete with other gratifications, can yield a genuine pleasure without women, is to suppose that our day could be cheerful without the light of the sun. At this village, the wife of a Mahometan oilman conducted my culinary business, but in a manner far different from that of my late musical friend: she took most unwarrantable emoluments out of an ill-dressed supper; and her cat, which seemed to have a congenial temper, made an attack on my baggage at night, and carried off the little stock of provisions which I had prepared for the next day's breakfast.

Lest my arrival at Jumbo should excite enquiry, which from the disposition of the chief might not be favourable, I denominated myself an officer in the Jumbo service, travelling from the army, which was then in the field, to the city. The road this day leading in a south-west* direction, was the most dreary one I had ever seen, and became more so from the want of a companion. On approaching so large a town as Jumbo, I expected to have seen a moderately populous country; but the aspect was altogether the reverse. Many miles of the road lay through a defile of sand, the sides of which consist of lofty rocks, and nearly perpendicular. The predicament in which I then stood, gave a gloomy cast to my thoughts, which naturally adverted to that long-established position, of "man being a sociable animal;" the truth of which, few are more convinced of than myself. I did not dwell on the various uses inherent in the principles of society, nor on the grander benefits so extensively diffused by general compact; but was contented with viewing the lesser conveniences which it imparts, with reflecting on the casual, but grateful enjoyments which men receive from the most fluctuating intercourse. What harmony, what good humour, are often

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* A religious tribe of Hindoos who profess celibacy.

The southern inclination of this day, was caused, I apprehend, from the formation of some branch of the mountains.

seen circulating in a sweetmeat-shop, the coffee-house of India! where all subjects, except that of the ladies, are treated with freedom; not so eloquently perhaps, nor with such refinement of language, as among the politicians of an European capital, yet with equal fervour and strength of voice. The favourite topic is war: there you may hear of exploits performed by a single arm, at the recital of which even Secunder* would have grown pale, and Ruftum † himself trembled. The pleasure of communication, by which they become the heroes of their own tale, is a keen spur to the various class of adventurers, and perhaps fewer men would encounter services of hazard, were not a pleasure expected from their recital.

On the side of the road, to my great joy, I at length discovered a family sitting on a narrow green spot, where, availing themselves of the singular situation, they were grazing their cattle. I sat myself down without ceremony, and was presented with what I have often recollected with pleasure, (for the heat of the day had made me very thirsty,) a cup of buttermilk. The father told me that the oppressions of his landlord had forced him to quit his house, and he was then in quest of some securer residence. On your side of India, acts are doubtless committed, that tend to sully the honour and impress an odium on the character of our nation; but they are, believe me, faint specks when compared with the deeds of injustice and rapacity practised in other Asiatic countries. One of the family suffered much pain from a lacerated finger; and as all persons of my colour are in India denominated surgeons, wizards, and artillery-men, I was called upon to administer help, which I did gratis, to their great satisfaction.

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* The Asiatic name of Alexander the Great.

† A hero celebrated in the ancient legends of Persia.

Towards the evening, I arrived at the lower town of Jumbo, where seeing a retired house at which I intended to have sought admission, I discovered a person who, about a month before, travelled for some days in the same party with me; but being employed on some service of dispatch, he had left it. This man being now the servant of a Kashmirian at Jumbo, for whom I had brought a letter of introduction, and whose name I used to mention in the course of the journey, destroyed my scheme of privacy. He ran off as soon as he had distinctly seen me, and speedily returned with his master, who would not rest satisfied until he had lodged me in his house, though we were obliged to proceed thither in the midst of a heavy rain: it would be a tedious and flat story, to detail the multiplied modes of the respect of this Kashmirian for my person, which he had never before seen; or to enumerate his painful, yet incessant attentions. Whatever partiality I might entertain for my own merits, I was necessarily impelled to see that his assiduity proceeded from a belief of the opulence, and the wish of transacting the commercial business of his guest. After he had gone through the long routine of my extraordinary qualities and accomplishments, of whose excellency he had been advised by his correspondent at Lucknow, he congratulated my singular good fortune in having met him so early on my arrival; for, except himself, I should not have found an honest man in Jumbo. Such, my friend, is the effervescence of Oriental speech, which if exposed to the colder air of the north, would subside into that strain of language spoken every day in Change-Alley and Cheapside. It was best not to undeceive my Kashmirian, as the character of a merchant is more respected here than any other, and under which the least suspicion is entertained of a stranger. On presenting my bill to the banker at Jumbo, I found, from its having been twice drenched in water, that the folds adhered together as firmly as if they had been pasted. The banker[*], with much good-nature, soaking the paper in water, and opening the folds with care, was enabled to read, though with difficulty, the contents. Had he been disposed to protract the payment, there was sufficient cause; but holding out no demur, he at once said the bill was a good one, kindly observing also, that as my journey had been long and fatiguing, I should have brought an order for a larger sum.

JUMBO is situated on the side of a hill, and contains two distinct divisions, which are termed the upper and the lower towns. The bottom of the hill is washed by the river Rawee[†], about forty or fifty yards broad, and fordable at most seasons of the year. Many water-mills stand on its banks for grinding corn, which are constructed in a neater manner than any I have seen in India; and were introduced by the Kashmirians, who have greatly improved as well as enriched this town. The short stay at Jumbo prevented me from procuring much satisfactory information of its history, or the causes which have produced its important commerce, riches, and luxury: for Jumbo, even in its decayed state, is a mart of the first note in this quarter of the country. Perhaps the collection of such materials would not have compensated the labour of perusal, or afforded you that instruction which I ever wish to be the effect of my communications:—but such as I have procured, shall be genuinely laid before you.

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[*] His name is Juala Naut, the nephew of Kashmiry Mull, at Benares.

[†] It falls into the Chinnaun.

PREVIOUSLY to Nadir Shah's invasion of India, the common road from Delhi to Kashmire, lay through Sirhend, Lahore, and Heerpour, the pass of which is fully described by Mr. Bernier, under the name of Bember. Since the inroad of the Persians, Afghans, and the Marhattas, but especially since the period of the Sicque conquests, that track has been rendered unsafe to merchants, and is now disused. This obstruction diverted the Kashmirian trade into the channel of Jumbo, which being shut up from the Punjab by a strong chain of mountains, difficult of access to cavalry, it has been preferred to the Lahore road, though the journey is tedious, and the expenses of merchandize increased.

RUNZEID DEVE, the father of the present chief of Jumbo, who deservedly acquired the character of a just and wise ruler, largely contributed to the wealth and importance of Jumbo. Perceiving the benefits which would arise from the residence of Mahometan merchants, he held out to them many encouragements, and observed towards them a disinterested and an honourable conduct. Negative virtues only are expected from an Asiatic despot, and under such a sanction his subjects might deem themselves fortunate; but the chief of Jumbo went farther than the forbearance of injuries; he avowedly protected and indulged his people, particularly the Mahometans, to whom he allotted a certain quarter of the town, which was thence denominated Moghulpour; and that no reserve might appear in his treatment of them, a mosque was erected in the new colony; a liberality of disposition the more conspicuous, and conferring the greater honour on his memory, as it is the only instance of the like toleration in this part of India, and as the Kashmirians, who chiefly composed his Mahometan subjects, have been, since their conversion, rigorous persecutors of the Hindoos. He was so desirous also of acquiring their confidence and esteem, that when he has been riding through their quarter during the time of prayer, he never failed to stop his horse until the priest had concluded his ritual exclamations. The Hindoos once complained to this chief, that the public wells of the town were defiled by the vessels of the Mahometans, and desired that they might be restricted to the water of the river; but he abruptly dismissed the complaint, saying, that water was a pure element, designed for the general use of mankind, and could not be polluted by the touch of any class of people. An administration so munificent and judicious, at the same time that it enforced the respect of his own subjects, made Jumbo [illegible] place of extensive commercial resort, where all descriptions of men experienced, in their persons and property, [illegible] full security.

The articles of merchandize constituting the trade of Jumbo, and Kashmire, are transported by men, usually Kashmirians, whose burthens are heavy, two of them making the load of a strong mule, and the hire is fixed at the rate of four rupees for each carrier. The shawls, when exported from Kashmire, are packed in an oblong bale, containing a certain weight or quantity, which in the language of the country is termed a *biddery*, the outward covering of which is a buffalo's or ox's hide, strongly sewed with leather thongs. As these packages are supposed to amount, with little variation, to a value long since ascertained, they are seldom opened until conveyed to the destined market. A Kashmirian porter carries a load as a soldier does his knapsack, and when disposed to rest, he places under it a stick in the form of a crutch which supports the load and assists him also in walking. Two causes are assigned for employing men only in this service: an agreement, it is said, arising from a mutual jealousy, has been made between the chiefs bordering on either side of the river Chinnaun*, that no fixed bridge shall be constructed, or any boat stationed on that stream. The other cause ascribed, which seems to be more forcible, is the stupendous height and steepness of the intervening mountains, which renders the passages dangerous, if not wholly impracticable, to either a horse or mule.

It appears that Jumbo continued to increase its power and commerce until the year 1770, the period of Runzeid Deve's death; when one of his sons, the present chief, contrary to the intention and express will of his father, seized on the government, put to death one of his brothers, the intended successor, and imprisoned another; who having made his escape, sought the protection of the Sicques. Pleased in having obtained so favourable a pretext for entering Jumbo, which they attempted in vain during the administration of Runzeid Deve, the Sicques promised to espouse the fugitive's cause with vigour. A small sum had been annually exacted by them from Jumbo, but in a much less proportion than what was levied in the adjacent territories. The Sicques, indeed, aware of the respectable state of the Jumbo force, and the ability of the chief, were contented with the name of tribute. The most valuable division of the Jumbo districts, lay in the plain country, forming part of the Northern Punjab; which, under pretence of affording assistance to the person who lately sought their protection, a body of Sicques have laid waste. They are now prosecuting a vigorous war against the present chief, who, through the defection of many of his people, driven by oppressions to the party of his brother, became unable to make any effectual stand; and that his ill fortune might be complete, he called into his aid, a party of Sicque mercenaries, commanded by Mhah Sing, a powerful officer in that quarter, who has firmly established his authority at Jumbo, and has erected a fort at the south entrance of the principal pass leading into the Punjab. For defraying the expence incurred by the Sicque troops, the Jumbo chief has made rigorous demands on the native inhabitants of the city, and is now throwing an eye on the foreign merchants; who, dreading his disposition and necessities, have taken a general alarm. It was with much pleasure I saw the person on whom my bill was drawn, a man of a fair and honourable character, enjoying, amidst these disorders, a moderate security. He seemed to have procured the favour of Mhah Sing, who, with other officers of the party, supported him against the designs of the Rajah. The person entrusted with the government of the town of Jumbo, during the absence of the chief then in the field, was so exact a counterpart of his master in the system of oppression, that I was advised to a speedy departure, lest I should fall under an inspection. Though much fatigued by an harassing journey, and the sale of my horse, with other necessary concerns, was to be adjusted, such was the ascendancy of my fears, that on the 16th of the month, I was ready to proceed.

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* The fourth Punjab river from the eastward.

In laying before you these scattered pieces of intelligence, I must not forget to notice, that the courtesans and female dancers of the Punjab and Kashmire, or rather a mixed breed of both these countries, are beautiful women, and are held in great estimation through all the Northern parts of India: the merchants established at Jumbo, often become so fondly attached to a dancing girl, that, neglecting their occupation, they have been known to dissipate, at her will, the whole of their property; and I have seen some of them reduced to a subsistence on charity; for these girls, in the manner of their profession, are profuse and rapacious.

My Kashmirian host, who continued to oppress me with kindness, had a brother living in the same house, who was so much afflicted with the rheumatism, that he could not stir out of his room. Possessing much useful information, with a pleasant sociable temper, I was glad to be admitted to his conversation, which equally amused me, and contributed to a knowledge of this quarter of India. He gave me also some directions for my conduct in Kashmire, which were delivered with an air of candour, and so apparently void of design, that I should have been ridiculously sceptical in not giving them credit. The day I left Jumbo, he called me into his room, and in very affectionate language, said, "My "friend, you are now about visiting a country, "whose inhabitants are of a character different "from any you have hitherto seen, and it be- "hoves you to be wary and diligent, for they "are a subtle and keen people. You must "particularly be on your guard against my "brother, who is now in that country, and "will probably endeavour to borrow some of "your money. Steadily withstand his solici- "tations, nor lend him a rupee; for if you do, "the money is lost. Make your disbursements "only on the delivery of the goods, and, however urgent he is, do not make any advance." He displayed, I thought, a singular trait of honesty in giving an advice wholly divested of a tendency to promote the interests of his family, at the expence of fair dealing.

Though the districts of Buddoo and Chinanah * do not at this day form immediate appendages of Jumbo, they are so intimately dependent on its policy, that, to avoid prolixity, I will throw their limits into one description. This united territory is bounded on the north by the river Chinaun, which divides it from Kishtewer; on the east by independent Hindoo districts; on the south by Bissouly; and on the west by the Punjab. It would be hazarding too hasty an assertion to offer any specific calculation of the Jumbo revenue, as the larger moiety is produced by import and export duties, which are now in a fluctuating state, and have been diminishing since the accession of the present chief; but the current information of the country, states the ordinary receipt at five lacks of rupees, exclusive of the produce of Buddoo and Chinauah.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

This district lies to the westward of Jumbo.

LETTER XI.

DEAR SIR,

THE frequent introduction of the Sicques to your notice, will have naturally excited a desire to examine the history of this new and extraordinary people, who, within a period of twenty years, have conquered a tract of country, extending in certain directions from the Ganges to the Indus. My knowledge of the subject does not permit me to deduce, on substantial authority, their history from the period in which Nanock their first institutor and law-giver lived, or mark with an order of dates the progress which this people have made, and the varying gradations of their power, until their attainment of their present state of national importance. You who are apprised of the futility of the documents which compose the general texture of Eastern record*, who have witnessed the irresistible tendency of an Asiatic mind to fiction, and the produce of its ductile fancy, will grant me an indulgent scope, and will, I trust, believe, that though the body of the history be not complete, such parts only will be noticed, as are either founded on received tradition, or on those legends which have the least exceptionable claims to credit.

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* Neither the genius of the people, nor the form of their government is favourable to the growth of history, which is rarely seen to flourish on despotic ground. The actions of Asiatic princes are

UNDER shelter of this preliminary, I will proceed to inform you that Nanock*, the founder of the Sicque nation, was born in the year of the Christian æra 1469, during the reign of Sultan Beloul †, at the village of Tul-

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usually recorded by their own scribes; and we know that a large portion of the annals of India was manufactured under Imperial inspection. It is, therefore, scarcely within the verge of probability, that a writer, attracted by so powerful an influence, would have dared to have thrown the piercing light of history on the reigning monarch, or even to have examined with freedom the actions of his ancestors, who have, for more than two hundred years, maintained an unbroken succession of the empire of Hindostan. Oriental speech, pregnant with figure, and capable of expressing the wildest flights of fancy, disdains the limits of history. It is better fitted to modulate poetic strains, and describe the wide region of romance; where it can roam without restraint, and happily without the power of committing extensive injuries.

* He was of the *Chittery* or second cast of Hindoos, and, according to a secret belief of the Sicques, a species of secondary incarnation of the Supreme Deity.

† A Patan King of Delhi, who reigned previous to Baber's conquest of Hindostan.

wundy *, about sixty miles to the westward of Lahore. Nanock appears to have possessed qualities happily adapted to effect the institution of a new system of religion. He was inflexibly just; he enjoyed from nature a commanding elocution, and was endowed with a calm passive fortitude, which successfully supported him through the long course of a dangerous occupation. The tenets of Nanock forbid the worship of images, and ordain that the places of public prayer shall be of plain construction, and devoid of every exhibition of figure. A book, intitled the *Grunth*, which contains the civil and religious institutes of Nanock, is the only typical object which the Sicques have admitted into their places of worship. Instead of the intermediation of subordinate deities, they are directed to address their prayer to one God, who, without the aid of any delegate, is to be considered the unassociated Ruler of the universe †.

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* This village is now known by the name of Rhaypour. The terms given by the Sicques to their places of worship, are *Sunghut*, *Durmsallah*, and *Dairah*, words signifying, in the Hinduee, an assembly of the people, a charitable or pious foundation, and a house. This last appellation seems to be applied in an eminent sense, as "the house." The Sicques, in commemoration of the place of Nanock's birth, have erected an edifice at Tulwundy, where a grand festival is annually celebrated.

† When it is noticed that the worship of the Hindoos is loaded with a mass of puerile ceremony, and oftentimes conducted with a

Though many essential differences exist between the religious code of the Hindoos and that of the Sicques, a large space of their ground-work exhibits strong features of similarity. The article indeed of the admission of proselytes amongst the Sicques, has caused an essential deviation from the Hindoo system, and apparently levelled those barriers which were constructed by Brimha, for the arrangement of the different ranks and professions of his people. Yet this indiscriminate admission, by the qualifications which have been adopted, do not widely infringe on the customs and prejudices of those Hindoos who have embraced the faith of the Sicques. They still preserve the distinctions which originally marked their sects, and perform many of the ancient ceremonies of their nation. They form matrimonial connections only in their own tribes, and adhere implicitly to the rules prescribed by the Hindoo law, in the choice and preparation of their food. The only aliment used in common, by the Sicques at this day,

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ridiculous grimace, it will not seem surprising that a creed, founded on principles calculated to promote the establishment of a simple uniform religion, and promulgated by a man of distinguished tribe and exemplary manners, should draw to it proselytes even in the bigoted regions of India.

is the *pursaud* *, or sacred bread, from the participation of which no tribe or class of their people is excluded.

FEW events of historical importance are related of Nanock, the founder of this sect; who possessing neither territory nor wealth, nor aided by the force of arms, preached his doctrine in peace, and manifested, in the countries which he visited, an unaffected simplicity of manners. He journeyed through most of the kingdoms in India, from whence, according to the tradition of the Sicques, he went into Persia and Arabia. In his travels, which with short intervals continued for the space of fifteen years, he was attended by a Mahometan musician, named Murdana, who became his convert, and ever remained faithfully attached to his person. It is said that in one of the expeditions of Baber † into India, Nanock having been apprehended by some of the soldiers, was brought before that prince, who, informed of the sanctity of his character, treated him with respect and indulgence. As no records of the

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* The *pursaud* is said to be a composition of flour, butter, and certain spices; this bread, after being consecrated by the Bramins, is also used by some sects of Hindoos in the ceremony of administering an oath, particularly in that quarter of the Orissa province, contiguous to the temple of Juggud Nautt.

† Baber defeated the Patan King of Hindostan, in A. D. 1526.

Moghul Empire bear a testimony of the existence of this sect during the period in which Nanock lived, it cannot be supposed that his converts were numerous or powerful. Nanock, according to the Sicque records, died in the month of August, A. D. 1539, aged seventy years, at Dayrah, a village on the banks of the Rawee, about forty miles to the northward of Lahore, where a vast concourse of people annually assemble, to perform certain ceremonies in commemoration of the day of his decease. Nanock, though he had two sons, devolved the charge of the mission to his favourite disciple Anghut*, a Hindoo of the Chittery tribe, to whom he also entrusted the publication† of the laws and precepts of his doctrine. Anghut, who seems to have passed his time in retirement, died about the year 1542, at the town of Khadour ‡, the place of his nativity. He was succeeded by Ammerdass, a native of the Lahore district, who propagated the new doctrine without molestation, and died in the year 1574, at the village of Govindual*. Ramdass†, who had espoused the daughter of the last preceptor of the Sicques, was then chosen the representative of their sect. This priest lived in the reign of Acbar, and, according to the tradition of the Sicques, experienced some marks of that emperor's favour. Retiring in the latter part of his life to a small district‡ in the vicinity of Lahore, which Acbar had granted to him, he founded the town of Ramdasspour. He repaired also and ornamented a reservoir of water, which had in ancient times been dedicated at that place by the Hindoos to their God *Ram*, and to which he now gave the name of *Amrut Sir* §. Ramdass made a compilation of the history and precepts of his predecessors, and annexing his own commentaries, ordained that his disciples should form the principles of their faith on the doctrine set forth in the joint collection. Ramdass died, at the town he had founded, about the year 1581, and was succeeded by his son Arjun, who having incurred the displeasure of a Hindoo* favoured by Jehanguir, was committed by that prince to the persecution of his enemy; and his death, which happened in the year 1606, at Lahore, was caused, it is said, by the rigour of confinement. The succession devolved on Hurrgovind, his only son, who, actuated by revenge for the cruelties exercised on his father, and strongly supported by the enthusiastic valour of his adherents, dragged the Hindoo from his house, though within the walls of Lahore, and put him to death. Fearing the effects of the emperor's displeasure, Hurrgovind fled to Hurtarpour, a village founded by his father, where he collected an armed body for the defence of his person, and according to the records of the nation, defeated a force that Jehanguir had sent to punish his rebellion. But the vein of incongruous story which runs through the achievements of this militant priest, precludes the derivation of any extensive historical use. The only passage deserving a serious notice, represents, that an officer of Jehanguir, named Mahobut Khan, effected the Sicque's submission to the emperor, who ordered him to be imprisoned in the fort of Gualior: but that after a short confinement, he was, at the intercession of Mahobut Khan, set at liberty. It is not seen that Hurrgovind disturbed the peace of the Moghul government at a future period, but passing his days in a recluse manner, he died about the year 1644, at Khyrutpour, a village in the Punjab. The Sicques conferred the office of priesthood on Harray, the grandson of Hurrgovind, though four of their late preceptor's sons were alive. No other mention is made of Harray, than that he died in the year 1661 at Khyrutpour. At his death, a violent contest arose for the succession, which was claimed by the respective adherents of his two sons, Ramroy and Hurkishen, then in infancy; but not being enabled to adjust their claims at home, they appealed to the courts of law at Delhi, where the opponents appeared, and set forth their several pretensions. The cause it is said terminated in a permission being granted to the Sicques to nominate their own priest; when, adjusting the contest, they elected Hurkishen, who died at Delhi in 1664, a short time after his investiture.

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* Nanock changed the original name of his successor, which was Lina.

† The religious and historical writings of the Sicques, are written in a character called the *Gooroo Mhookee*, or the language of the *Gooroos*, or priests. This letter, which is said to have been invented by Nanock, differs from the various characters in use among the Hindoos.

‡ A village in the Punjab, about forty miles to the eastward of Lahore.

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* Situate on the Byas, the second Punjab river from the eastward.

† This Gooroo was born in the city of Lahore.

‡ At the distance of twenty-four miles from Lahore.

§ *Amrut*, according to the mythology of the Hindoos, is a water said to bestow immortality on those who drink it; and *Sir*, in certain dialects of the Hinduee, signifies a piece of water.

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* Named Chandoo.

Hurkishen was succeeded by Taigh Bhahauder, his uncle, who appears to have been persecuted with inveterate animosity by the adherents of Ramroy; who, being supported by some persons of influence at the court of Aurungzebe, an order was obtained for the imprisonment of the new priest. Taigh Bhahauder, after remaining in confinement at Delhi for the space of two years, was released at the intreaty of Jay Sing, the powerful chief of Jaynaghur, who was at that time proceeding to Bengal on the service of government. The Sicque accompanied his patron to Bengal, whence he returned to the city of Patna, which became his usual place of abode. The records of the Sicques say that Ramroy still maintained a claim to the priesthood, and that after a long series of virulent persecution, he accomplished the destruction of Taigh Bhahauder, who was conveyed to Delhi by an order of court, and in the year 1675, publicly put to death. The formal execution of a person, against whom, the Sicques say, no criminal charge was exhibited, is so repugnant to the character and the actions of Aurungzebe, that we are involuntarily led to charge the Sicques of a wilful misrepresentation of facts, injurious to the memory of the prince, and extravagantly partial to the cause of their priest. No document for the elucidation of this passage appearing in any of the memoirs of Hindostan that have reached my knowledge, I am prevented from discovering the quality of the crime which subjected Taigh Bhahauder to capital punishment.

GOVIND SING, then a youth, and the only son of Taigh Bhahauder, was called to the succession by the largest portion of the Sicque's disciples: but the intelligence of his father's death, and dread of a like fate, had induced him to fly from Patna, whence he retired, after a series of various adventures, into the territorry of Siringnaghur. Though Govind Sing could not then have reached his fifteenth year, he evinced many marks of a haughty and turbulent spirit, which was conspicuously shewn in his conduct to the Siringnaghur chief. On pretence of an insult being offered, he collected his party, which amounted, it is said, to four or five thousand men, and defeated a body of the Siringnaghur troops; but being worsted in some future action, or, according to the authority of the Sicque, obliged by an order of the emperor to leave the country of Siringnaghur, he proceeded with his adherents to the Punjab, where he was hospitably * received by a marauding Hindoo chief of that quarter. Endowed with an active and daring temper, the Sicque assisted his new associate in various expeditions against the bordering landholders, and often in opposing the forces of government. The predatory conduct of Govind Sing rendering him obnoxious to the governor of Sirhend, he was attacked

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* The dependencies of Mackaval, through which the river Sutledge runs, were given by this Hindoo to *Govind Sing*, where he founded certain villages.

and driven from his place of residence. Being afterwards discovered amongst the hills in the northern parts of the Sirhend districts, he was so vigourously pressed by the imperial troops, that, abandoning his family and effects, he was compelled to save himself by speedy flight. Vizier Khan, the governor of Sirhend, sullied the reputation he had acquired in this service, by putting to death, in cold blood, the two younger sons of Govind Sing. A severe vengeance was taken for this act at a future period by the Sicques, who, giving a loose to savage and indiscriminate cruelty, massacred the Mahometans, of every age and sex, that fell into their hands. After his late disaster, Govind Sing found a secure retreat in the Lacky Jungles *, which its natural defence, a scarcity of water, and the valour of its inhabitants †, had rendered at that day impregnable. But when the resentment of government abated, he returned without molestation to his former residence in the Punjab. The Sicques say, he even received marks of favour from Bhahauder Shah, who, being apprised of his military abilities, gave him a charge in the army which marched into the Decan to oppose the rebellion of Ram-

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* A woody country, situate in the northern part of the Punjab, and famous for a breed of excellent horses, called the Jungle Tazee.

† The Jatts.

buchsh*. Govind Sing was assassinated during this expedition by a Patan soldier, and he died of his wounds in 1708, at the town of Nandere †, without leaving any male issue; and a tradition delivered to the Sicques, limiting their priests to the number of ten, induced them to appoint no successor to Govind Sing. A Sicque disciple, named Bunda, who had attended Govind Sing to the Decan, came, after the death of his chief, into the Punjab; where, claiming a merit from his late connection, he raised a small force, and in various desultory enterprises, established the character of a brave but cruel soldier. His successes at length drew to his standard the whole body of the Sicque nation, which had now widely deviated from the precepts of their founder. A confidence in their strength, rendered presumptuous by the absence of the emperor, had made them rapacious and daring, and the late persecutions, cruel and enthusiastic. Bunda, after dispersing the parties of the lesser Mahometan chiefs, attacked the forces of Vizier Khan, the governor of Sirhend, who fell in an action that was fought with an obstinate valour, but ended in the total defeat of the imperial troops. The Sicques expressed an extraordinary joy at this victory, as it enabled them to satiate their revenge for the death of the sons of Govind Sing. The wife of Vizier Khan, with his children, and a vast multitude of the inhabitants of Sirhend, were destroyed with every species of wild fury. The mosques were overthrown or polluted, and the dead, torn out of their graves, were exposed to the beasts of prey. A party of Sicques had at the same time penetrated the greater Duab, and seized on the town and certain districts of Saharanpour*, where they slaughtered the inhabitants, or forcibly made them converts to the new faith. Bunda, who had rapidly acquired the possession of an extensive territory, was now deserted by his good fortune. He had crossed the river Sutledge with an intention of carrying his conquests to the westward, but being encountered by Shems Khan, an imperial officer who commanded in that quarter, he was repulsed with a great loss. The Sicque's troops employed in the Duab expedition, had even approached the vicinity of Delhi, but they were defeated by the forces of the empire, and driven back to the districts which still remained subject to Bunda.

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* A brother of Bhahauder Shah.

† Nandere is situate near the banks of the Godavery, about 100 miles to the north-east of Hyderabad.

Such was the situation of the Sicques when Bhahauder Shah finished the Decan campaign, and returned in the year 1710 to Hindostan.

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* For its situation, see Rennell's map.

Alarmed at the progress, and irritated at the cruelties they had exercised, he marched towards their stations with a determination to crush the sect, and revenge the injuries that had been inflicted on the Mahometan religion. Sultan Rouli Khan, one of his principal officers, advanced with a division of the army, and encountering the Sicques on the plains of Sirhend, put them to flight after a bloody conflict; and a party of the fugitives who had taken refuge with Bunda, in a strong post, were made prisoners, though not before their chief had escaped. The Sicques who survived this disaster, though compelled to disperse, and their chief to wander about the country in disguise, were not conquered in the reign of Bhahauder Shah. The death[*] of this prince impeded the success of an active pursuit which had been made after the vanquished sectaries, on whose lives a price was set in every part of the empire. Conformably to the order of the last priest, the disciples of Nanock had permitted the growth of the hair of the head and beard. An edict was therefore issued, compelling the Hindoos of every tribe to cut off their hair.

JEHANDER SHAH[†], who succeeded to the empire, made a feeble effort to accomplish the extirpation of the Sicques: but his short reign being involved in an alternate series of debauchery, and tumultuous defence of his country against the invasion of Furruck Sir; this people were encouraged to emerge from their concealment, and again take up the sword. In the reign of Furruck Sir[*], the Sicques, who had then collected a large force[†], were vigorously attacked by Abdul Sumet Khan, the governor of Lahore, who gave them battle near the fort of Loghur[‡], and gained a decisive victory. Those who escaped, took shelter with Bunda in Loghur, but being closely invested, and reduced to extreme distress from hunger, they surrendered at discretion[||]. The captives were conveyed in triumph to Delhi, where being exhibited in an ignominious manner to the inhabitants of the city, they met a deserved fate, for their savage and often unprovoked cruelties. Yet they met it with an undaunted firmness, and died amidst the wondering praise of the populace.

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[*] Bhahauder Shah died about the year 1712.

[†] This Emperor reigned only a few months

HAVING thus briefly related the origin of the Sicques[§], with a chronological notice of their ten priests, and the issue of Bunda's attempt to establish an independent dominion, I will interrupt the historical narrative at this period, by a summary description of certain domestic ordinances established by Nanock and his successors. The person desirous of becoming a member of the Sicque doctrine, is conducted into the presence of five or more of their people of any class or profession, assembled for the occasion; when one of them pours into the hollow of his hand a little water, which, being touched by the toe of the Sicques, the proselyte swallows, previously repeating the words—"*Wah*[*] *gooroojee ka khalsah, wah goo-*" "*roojee ka futtah.*" After the performance of this obligation, a cup filled with sherbet is introduced, out of which he drinks five times, and repeats at intervals the afore-mentioned ejaculation. At the conclusion of this ceremony, the convert is instructed in the use of a prayer of great length, in which the religious,

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[*] Furruck Sir's reign continued from 1712-3 to 1719.

[†] The Sicque forces amounted, it is said, to 20,000 cavalry.

[‡] Situate about one hundred miles to the north-west of Lahore.

[||] This event happened in 1714.

[§] The Sicques affix to their proper name the word *Sing*, which signifying a lion in the Sanscrit language, the appellation of *Sing*

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belongs properly to the military order. The civil body of the people, artisans, merchants, and all the lower classes, being denominated *Sicques*, or disciples.

[*] These words, composed of the Arabic and Hindoo languages, convey a benediction on the government of the Sicques, and on the memory of their priests. The Sicques salute each other by the expression *Wah Gooroo*, without any inclination of the body, or motion of the hand. The government at large, and their armies, are denominated *Khalsa* and *Khalsajee*.

moral, and political duties of a Sicque are set forth, and the observance of them enjoined.

THE first part of the initiation observed in admitting a proselyte, denotes the equality of the followers of Nanock, and is designed to destroy that fabric of ceremony and form, which the Hindoos are now taught to consider as the essential principle of their religion: but the purpose of the Sicque priests in elevating the new religion on this simple base, has been but partially executed. The military Sicques permit the hair of the head and beard to grow long; they usually fix an iron bracelet on the left hand, and they are prohibited the use of tobacco. These regulations, which were probably instituted by their law-givers to distinguish them from other nations, are now become duties of a primary class, and seem almost to form the essence of their creed *. By a law of Nanock,

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* This would appear to be an effect naturally produced in the minds of the bulk of mankind, who eagerly fix their attention and their affections on exterior objects; which having been taught to behold with sentiments of respect and religious enthusiasm, they become so strongly attached to them, that a portion of temporal welfare, with the hope of future happiness, seems among many nations to depend on a rigorous observance of form. A conspicuous example of this disposition was evinced in the rage which the Russians manifested on being obliged by Peter to shave heir beards. The prince perhaps encountered less danger and difficulty in giving a new form and new manners to the empire, han in accomplishing that change in the persons of his subjects.

widows are expressly forbidden to destroy themselves at the death of their husbands, and are permitted to renew the ceremonies of marriage. But so strong is yet the adherence of the Sicques who have been converted from the Hindoo tribes, to the ancient customs of their country, that many of their women are seen ascending the funeral pile; nor are they ever induced to enter a second time into the connubial state. The Sicques, after the manner of the Hindoos, bury their dead; and they oblige the Mahometan converts to adopt the like usage. They hold a lamentation for the death of any person criminal, and equally unjust as to be afflicted with grief at the payment of an equitable debt, or the surrender of a trust. Their belief of a future state seems to correspond in most of its parts with the metempsychosis of the Hindoos; and as a sketch of that system has been already given, any further explanation of it is unnecessary.

THE Sicque nation is composed of two distinct sects, or orders of people; those who compose the most ancient one are denominated *Khualasah**, and adhere, with little deviation, to the institutions of Nanock, and the eight succeeding priests; in obedience to which, the

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* *Khualasah* conveys virtually the same meaning in the Arabic as *Khalsah*, which signifies *pure*, *genuine*, &c.

Khualasah sect are usually occupied in civil and domestic duties. They cut off the hair of their heads and beards, and in their manners and appearance resemble the ordinary classes of the Hindoos *.

THE modern order of the Sicques, intitled *Khalsa*, was founded by Govind Sing; who, deviating from the ordinances of his predecessors, imparted a strong military spirit to his adherents, whose zealous attachment enabled him to indulge the bent of a fierce and turbulent temper, and to give scope to an ambition, naturally arising from the power which his popularity created. Govind Sing is said to have restricted his sectaries from the use of tobacco, and to have enjoined them to permit the growth of the beard, and the hair of the head. The military division of the people is composed of the Khalsa sect, which, from a native harshness of features and haughtiness of deportment, is conspicuously discriminated from that of the Khualasah, and other classes of the foreign converts.

FOR the space of seventy years after the death of Nanock, the growth of the Sicques was slow, and their conduct was regulated by a temperate discretion. But when the Moghul empire had received its mortal wound from the commotions which arose amongst the sons and the grandsons of Aurungzebe; when it was no longer guided by the skilful and vigorous hand which had diffused wisdom and spirit throughout its vast machine, the disciples of Nanock issued into the field, and participated in the varying fortunes of the day. The rebellions of the distant provinces, and the factions and intrigues of the court, events which rapidly followed the death of Aurungzebe, gave a powerful aid to the exertions of the Sicques, who, improving the favourable occasion, carried their depredations, even in the reign of Bhahauder Shah, to the environs of the capital. The situation * of the country where the doctrine of the Sicques had been the most widely promulgated, and where they first formed a military body, contributed to augment their power, as well as afford shelter against a superior force of their enemies. On the skirts of forests and mountains, impervious to cavalry, they enjoyed also the benefits arising from the vicinity of an opulent populous territory, which at once afforded a store of converts and plunder.

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* I have been informed that matrimonial connections are occasionally formed between the Hindoos, and *Khualasah* Sicques.

The Sicque common-wealth acquired an active strength from the spirit and valour of Bunda, who had inspired them with a zeal,

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* In the vicinity of the Punjab mountains.

which rendered meritorious every act of cruelty to the enemies of their faith, and gave their attacks, until opposed by the collected force of the empire, an irresistible impulse. The success of this fierce adventurer, had allured to his standard a numerous body of proselytes: some to obtain a protection against the rapacity of the Sicque government, others to take shelter from the oppressions or just demands of the empire: whilst many embraced the new doctrine, from the hope of participating the plunder of the Punjab. The larger portion of the converts were of the tribe of Jatts* and Goojers; a people who are chiefly seen in the northern parts of India. They are esteemed skilful and active husbandmen, but notorious for a turbulent and restless temper.

The defeat and death of Bunda effected a total destruction of the power of the Sicques, and, ostensibly, an extirpation of their sect. An edict was issued by Furruck Sir, directing that every Sicque falling into the hands of his officers, should, on a refusal of embracing the Mahometan faith, be put to the sword. A valuable reward was also given by the emperor, for the head of every Sicque; and such was the keen spirit that animated the persecution, such the success of the exertions, that the name of a Sicque no longer existed in the Moghul dominion. Those who still adhered to the tenets of Nanock, either fled into the mountains at the head of the Punjab, or cut off their hair, and exteriorly renounced the profession of their religion.

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* The Khalsa Sicques have largely originated from these tribes.

AFTER a period of more than thirty years, the spark that had lain concealed amongst the ruins of the fabrick of Nanock, burst forth, and produced a flame which hath never been extinguished. It is mentioned that the Sicque forces appeared in arms at the period of Nadir Shah's return from Delhi *; when the Persian army, incumbered with spoil, and regardless of order, was attacked in the rear by detached predatory parties of Sicque cavalry, who occasionally fell upon the baggage-guards, and acquired a large plunder. During the periods of tumult and distress, which followed the Persian †, and the first Afghan invasion, the Sicques emerged more conspicuously from their places of concealment; and collecting a numerous party of promiscuous adventurers, they soon rose into military importance. Even at the low ebb to which the Sicques had been reduced by the destruction of their force, the death of their leader, and the proscription of their sect, they had continued

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1739.

† From the year 1739 to 1746.

to resort secretly to Amrut Sir; and as the attention of the empire became, at subsequent periods, fixed on subjects that demanded an undivided force, the Sicques were not molested in visiting their favourite place of worship, which gradually rose into the capital of their narrow territory. Meer Munnoo*, the governor of Lahore in the reign of Ahmed Shah †, alarmed at an increase of power, the evils of which had been already manifested by the devastations of the Sicques in his own country, made a vigorous attack on them; and it is supposed that their force would then have been annihilated, had not this people found a strenuous advocate in his minister Korah Mul, who was himself of the Khualasah sect, and diverted Meer Munnoo from reaping the full fruits of the superiority he had gained.

Adina Beg Khan, an officer in the service of Meer Munnoo, had been sent with an army into the centre of the Sicque districts, which he overrun; and, encountering their army some time in the year 1749, had defeated it with great slaughter ‡. A permanent accommodation

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The son of Kummer-ud-Dein, the Vizier of Mahomet Shah.

† This prince succeeded to the Empire in 1747, and was deposed in 1753.

‡ This action was fought near the village of Mackavaul, in the northern districts of the Punjab.

was ultimately effected through the mediation of Korah Mul, between the Sicques and the governor of Lahore; who being engaged in operations that led to more interesting objects, the Sicques were left at liberty to acquire strength, and enlarge their territory, which extended from the vicinity of Lahore, to the foot of the mountains. Whilst Korah Mul lived, his influence over the Sicques confined them to their own limit, and restrained their depredations. But the death of this officer, who was slain* in an action fought with the Afghans, and the tumult which arose at the decease of Munnoo†, from the various competitors to the government of Lahore, enabled the Sicques to fix the basis of a power, which, though severely shaken at a subsequent period, has raised them from a lawless banditti to the rank of sovereigns of an extensive dominion. The charm which had so powerfully operated in augmenting and consolidating the spacious empire of the Indian Moghuls, and had in the eastern world proclaimed it invincible, was now broken; and a wide theatre was opened, in which every band of bold adventurers had an ample scope to exercise their courage, and where the most alluring objects were held out to the grasp of ambition and avarice. The southern territories had been dismembered from the empire; and the Persians and Afghans, the Marhattas and the Sicques, had severally plundered and laid waste the northern provinces, and the capital.

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* The death of Korah Mul happened in the year 1751.

† Meer Munnoo died in the year 1752.

AFTER the death of Meer Munnoo, and a rapid succession of fleeting governors, the government of Lahore devolved on Adina Beg Khan*; and the court of Delhi, in opposition to the arrangements of the Duranny Ahmed Shah, who had annexed the Lahore province to his dominion, avowedly supported the power which Adina Beg had assumed in the Punjab. The courage and military experience of this officer found an active employment in curbing the turbulent and rapacious spirit of the Sicques: but aware of the advantages that would arise from a confederacy with a people whose depredations, accompanied with every species of rapine, could not be prevented without continued warfare, Adina Beg made an alliance with the Sicques, founded on a scheme of combined hostilities against the Afghans, whose territories † he invited them to lay waste, without requiring participation of the booty. Every infringement of the compact being severely resented by Adina Beg, the Sicqúes were rarely seen interrupting the peace of his government.

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* The officer who defeated the Sicques at the battle of Mackavaul.

† The Afghans were at that time possessed of a tract of country, reaching from the Chinnaun river to the Indus.

The court of Delhi, having by intrigue and occasional military aids, zealously contributed to promote the successes of the Lahore chief; Ahmed Shah brought an army in the year 1756 into India, to recover the possession of the Punjab, and to punish Ghaze-ud-Dein, the minister of Alumguir the Second, who had assumed an absolute authority in the capital. Adina Beg, an active supporter of the minister's interests, which were closely united with his own, not having a sufficient force to meet Ahmed Shah Duranny in the field, fled into the adjacent mountains, where he remained in concealment until the departure of the Afghan prince to his northern dominions.

In the year 1757, or 1758, a numerous army of Marhattas *, after subduing the adjacent territory, arrived in the city of Delhi, where their chiefs assumed an absolute sway. Adina Beg, aware of the benefits of an alliance with the Marhattas, represented to their chiefs, that.

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* They had been invited into Hindostan by Ghaze-ud-Dein, to support an administration which was detested by the people, and opposed by a party at court. Had not the arms of Ahmed Shah the Duranny prevailed over the Marhattas at the battle of Panii, field, it is probable that the Mahomedan power would have been extinguished in India.

the Punjab garrisons, weakened by the departure of Ahmed Shah, would fall an easy conquest to their arms, which he offered to reinforce with his party, and the influence he possessed in that quarter. The Marhatta army moved without delay into the Punjab, and, expelling the Afghans from Sirhend and Lahore, reduced to their power a tract of country that extended to the river Jaylum*. National commotions calling the principal Marhatta officers into the Decan, they appointed Adina Beg Khan, who had largely promoted their success, the governor of Lahore: but he died early in the following year, at an advanced age, highly celebrated in Upper India for his military and political talents.

The Sicques, awed by the superiour power of the Marhattas, and fearful of incurring the resentment of Adina Beg, had not, during his government, carried their depredations into the low country. In the course of the several expeditions which the Afghans made into India under Ahmed Shah, they were severely harassed by the Sicques, who cut off many of their detached parties; and evinced, in the various schemes of annoying the Afghans, an indefatigable intrepidity.

Ahmed Shah, having, in conjunction with

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* The fifth Punjab river from the eastward.

the Mahometan chiefs of Hindostan, routed the combined forces of the Hindoos at the battle of Pannifrett, in the beginning of the year 1761, and driven the Marhattas from the northern provinces, meditated a full revenge on the Sicques; who, during a small interval of his absence, had, in the latter end of the same year, seized on the largest division of the Lahore province. Early in the year 1762, he entered the Punjab, which he overran with a numerous army, dispersing the Sicques wherever they appeared, and diffusing a general terror by the havock which marked his invasion. The Afghan soon became possessed of all the low country, and the Sicques, dismayed at his rapid success, and the cruelties exercised by his fierce soldiery, abandoned the plains, and sought a shelter with their families in the skirts of the mountains. A large party of Sicques had retired towards the northern districts * of Sirhend, which being more than an hundred miles distant from Lahore, the station of the Afghan army, they were not apprehensive of any immediate attack. But the motions and onset of Ahmed Shah were equally rapid and dreadful. He fell suddenly on this body in February 1762, having marched from Lahore in less than two days, and

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* The villages of Goojerwal and Baffpour, were at that time their common places of refuge.

cut to pieces, it is said, twenty-five thousand of their cavalry. The Sicques, in their day of success, having defiled and destroyed the mosques and other sacred places of the Mahometans, compelling also many of them to embrace the faith of Nanock, now felt the savage vengeance of their enemies. Amrut Sir was razed to the ground, and the sacred waters choked up with its ruins. Pyramids were erected, and covered with the heads of slaughtered Sicques; and it is mentioned, that Ahmed Shah caused the walls of the principal mosques which had been polluted by the Sicques, to be washed with their blood, that the contamination might be removed, and the ignominy offered to the religion of Mahomet, expiated. Yet these examples of ferocious rigour did not quell the native courage of the Sicques, who still continued to issue from their fastnesses, to hover on the rear of the Afghan armies, and to cut off their scattered parties.

AHMED SHAH, in the close of the year 1762, returned into Afghanistan, which, being composed of provinces recently conquered or acquired, and inhabited by a warlike fierce people, demanded a vigilant personal attention. A body of his troops commanded by an officer of distinguished rank, had been stationed in the Lahore territory, and in the capital, which was strongly garrisoned. But soon after the march of Ahmed Shah, the Sicques were seen descending from their various holds on the Punjab, which they rapidly laid waste, and after several desultory actions, in which the Afghans were defeated, they besieged, and, what seems extraordinary, they took the city of Lahore; where wildly indulging the enmity that had never ceased to inflame them against these severe scourges of their nation, they committed violent outrages. The mosques that had been rebuilt or restored to use by the Mahometans, were demolished with every mark of contempt and indignation; and the Afghans, in chains, washed the foundations with the blood of hogs. They were also compelled to excavate the reservoir at Amrut Sir, which in the preceding year they had filled up. The Sicques, however, keenly actuated by resentment, set a bound to the impulse of revenge; and though the Afghan massacre and persecution must have been deeply imprinted on their minds, they did not, it is said, destroy one prisoner in cold blood.

The records of the Sicques give a relation of a battle fought with the Afghans, previously to the capture of Lahore: but [illegible] its asserted issue does not correspond with the series of success, which conspicuously in India accompanied the Afghan arms under Ahmed Shah, or stand supported by any collateral proof to which I have had access, I am necessarily led to doubt some part of the Sicque's relation. This event is said to have happened in October 1762, when the collected body of the Sicque nation, amounting to sixty thousand cavalry, had formed a junction at the ruins of Amrut Sir, for the purpose of performing some appointed ceremony, and where they resolved, expecting the attack, to pledge their national existence on the event of a battle. Ahmed Shah, at that time encamped at Lahore, marched with a strong force to Amrut Sir*, and immediately engaged the Sicques; who, roused by the fury of a desperate revenge, in sight also of the ground sacred to the founders of their religion, whose monuments had been destroyed by the enemy they were then to combat, displayed, during a bloody contest, which lasted from the morning until night, an enthusiastic and fierce courage, which ultimately forced Ahmed Shah to draw off his army and retire with precipitation to Lahore. The Sicques, it is also said, pursued the enemy to that city, which they took after a short siege; and that Ahmed Shah, having made his escape before the surrender, crossed the Indus. Any probability of this event can only be reconciled by a supposition, that the army of Ahmed Shah had suffered some extraordinary reductions, previously to the period in which this occurrence* is said to have happened. Without a further discussion of this clouded fact, we will proceed to the common annals of the day, where it is seen that the Duranny returned into the Punjab, in the autumn of 1763; when he retook Lahore, and again drove the Sicques from the low country. The successes of this prince, though decided at the moment, were not followed by either a benefit to himself or to the country he conquered; and could be only traced by slaughter and rapine: for in the course of the following year, during his short absence, the Sicques ravaged the Punjab, expelled the Afghan garrisons, and pursued their fortune with so vigorous a rapidity, that during the year 1764, they had over-run, and seized on, an extent of territory reaching from the borders of the Indus, to the districts of Delhi.

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* This place is about forty miles to the westward of Lahore.

Ahmed Shah, in the three following years, continued to maintain a desultory war with the Sicques; but possessing no treasure in India, fearing also the effects of a remote residence from his native dominion, he must have at length shrunk from the difficulties of conquering a numerous people, who, when driven from the plains, possessed impenetrable retreats in forests and mountains; and, what was more dreadful to their enemies, an invincible courage.

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* A total eclipse of the sun is said to have happened on the day of action.

After the year 1767, the period of his last campaign in India, Ahmed Shah seems to have wholly relinquished the design of subduing the Punjab. The Sicques now became the rulers of a large country, in every part of which they established an undivided authority, and raised in it the solid structure of a religion, in the propagation and defence of which, their persevering valour merits no common applause.

Timur Shah, the reigning prince of Afghanistan, the son of Ahmed Shah, had made war on the Sicques with various success. During the interval of his last campaign in India, he wrested from them the city, with a large division of the province of Moultan; which the Sicques, contrary to the spirit of their national character, evacuated, after a weak resistance. This surrender might on the first view be termed pusillanimous, especially when the inactive disposition of Timur is considered; but it seems to have been a natural consequence of their eternal divisions, and the fears entertained by the body at large, of the increase of individual power. The dominions of the Sicques, whose limits are ever in a state of fluctuation, was, in the year 1782, bounded on the north by the chain of mountains that extend in an oblique line across the head of the Punjab; on the east, by the possessions of the emperor and his officers, which reach to Pannifrett and Kurrwaul; on the south-east, by the Agra districts; on the south, by Moultan; and on the west by the Indus, except where the town and independencies of Attock, and some petty chiefships, are interspersed.

THE Sicques have reduced the largest portion of the territory of Zabitah Khan, leaving him little more than the fort of Ghous Ghur, with a very limited domain in its vicinity. This chief, the degenerate son of Najeb-ud-Dowlah, has made no vigorous effort in his defence; but thinking to soothe them, and divert their encroachments, assumed the name of a Sicque, and ostensibly, it is said, became a convert to the faith of Nanock *. It is not seen that he derived any benefit from his apostacy; for at the period of my journey through the Duab, the Sicques were invading his fort, and he was reduced to the desperate alternative of calling in a body of their mercenaries to his assistance.

IN the beginning of the year 1783, a party of Sicques traversing the Ghous Ghur districts, ap-

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* Durm Sing, was the name taken by Zabitah Khan. He was succeeded by his son Gholam Bhahawler, in 1785, who, though an active soldier, and respected by the Sicques, is not emancipated from their power.

proached the Ganges, where it forms the western limit of Rohilcund, with an intention of crossing the river, and invading the country of the Vizier. Being at that time in Rohilcund, I witnessed the terror and general alarm which prevailed amongst the inhabitants, who, deserting the open country, had retired into forts and places inaccessible to cavalry. The Sicques, perceiving the difficulty of passing a river in the face of the Vizier's troops, which were posted on the eastern bank, receded from their purpose. This fact has been adduced to shew that the Sicques command an uninterrupted passage to the Ganges *.

Thus have I laid before you, according to the most substantial authorities that I could obtain, the origin of the Sicques; their first territorial establishment, and the outlines of the progress they made, in extending a spacious dominion, and consolidating the power which they at this day possess. We have seen this people, at two different periods, combating the force of the Moghul empire, and so severely depressed by its superior strength, that the existence of their sect was brought to the edge of annihilation. The Afghan war involved them in a

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* The Sicque forces assembled again in the beginning of the year 1785, when they entered the province of Rohilcund, and having laid it waste, for the space of one hundred miles, they returned unmolested.

series of still more grievous calamity; as they had then laid the foundation of a growing power, and more sensibly felt the ravages of a formiable foe. They were driven from the sanctuary of their religion, and persecuted with a rage which seemed to keep pace with the increasing strength and inveteracy of their enemy: yet we have seen, that in the lowest ebb of fortune, they retained the spirit of resource; that they boldly seized on every hold which offered support; and, by an invincible perseverance, that they ultimately rose superior in a contest with the most potent prince of his age. Grand auxiliary causes operated also in the formation and final establishment of the Sicques' dominion. It hath already been noticed, that the first efforts of this people commenced at a time when the Moghul empire lost its energy and vigour; when intestine commotions, the intrigues of a luxurious court, and the defection of distant governors, had promoted the increase of individual interests, and a common relaxation of allegiance.

The decisive superiority obtained over the Sicques, by Meer Munnoo, would, we must believe, with a judicious application of its uses, have removed to a farther distance the rank which this state now maintains in Hindostan.

To develope the actions of men, with whose history we are trivially acquainted, would be fabricating too refined a system of speculation; nor would I now investigate so obscure a subject, were it not to generally observe, that the preservation of the Sicques from the effects of Meer Munnoo's success, appears to have been largely promoted by the interference of his minister Khorah Mul, who, being himself a Sicque, naturally became a trusty advocate of the sect; and who, it is said, completed his ascendancy over the Mahometan, by a considerable donation. But the distracted state of Ahmed Shah's Afghan and Persian dominion, which urgently called on a personal administration, afforded the Sicques the most favourable occasions of accomplishing the conquest of the Punjab; and it is probable, that, had the Afghan prince been enabled to prolong his campaigns in Hindostan, the Sicques would not, during his life, have attained any extensive degree of national consequence.

I FIND an embarrassment in applying a distinct term to the form of the Sicque government, which, on the first view, bears an appearance of aristocracy; but a closer examination discovers a large vein of popular power branching through many of its parts. No honorary or titular distinction is conferred on any member * of the state, and the chiefs are treated with a deference that would seem to arise only from the military charges they may at the instant be invested with, and from a self-preserving regard to the subordination necessarily required in conducting an armed body. Though orders are issued in a Sicque army, and a species of obedience observed, punishments are rarely inflicted; and the chiefs, who often command parties of not more than fifty men, being numerous, its motions are tumultuous and irregular. An equality of rank is maintained in their civil society, which no class of men, however wealthy or powerful, is suffered to break down. At the periods when general councils of the nation were convened, which consisted of the army at large, every member had the privilege of delivering his opinion; and the majority, it is said, decided on the subject in debate. The Khalsah Sicques, even of the lowest order, are turbulent people, and possess a haughtiness of deportment, which, in the common occurrences of life, peculiarly marks their character. Examples of this disposition I have myself witnessed, and one of them I think merits a distinct notice. In travelling through the Siringnaghur country, our

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* The posterity of the ten priests are occasionally denominated *pargadahs*, that is, descendants of a saint, or prophet.

party was joined by a Sicque horseman, and being desirous of procuring his acquaintance, I studiously offered him the various attentions which men observe to those they court. But the Sicque received my advances with a fixed reserve and disdain, giving me, however, no individual cause of offence; for his deportment to the other passengers was not less contemptuous. His answer, when I asked him the name of his chief, was wholly conformable to the observations I had made of his nation. He told me (in a tone of voice, and with an expression of countenance, which seemed to revolt at the idea of servitude) that he disdained an earthly superior, and acknowledged no other master than his prophet!

THE civil and military government of the Sicques, before a common interest had ceased to actuate its operations, was conducted by general and limited assemblies, which presided over the different departments of the state. The grand convention, called in their language *Goorimotta*, was that in which the army met to transact the more important affairs of the nation; as the declaration of war or peace, forming alliances, and detaching parties on the service of the year. The amount of the contributions levied on the public account was reported to this assembly, and divided among the chiefs, proportionably to the number of their troops. They were at the same time obliged to distribute a certain share of this property to their soldiers, who, on any cause of dissatisfaction, made no hesitation in quitting their service, and following a more popular leader. Subordinate officers were established for registering the political correspondence of the state, and for providing warlike stores; and the administration of ecclesiastical affairs was entrusted to a certain society of religieuse, composed chiefly of the descendants of their original priests, but they did not possess any influence in the temporal regulation of the state. These were the principal ordinances enacted by the first chiefs, when the people were united, and a common object governed their public conduct. The dominions of the Sicques, now widely extended, have been since divided into numerous states, which pursue an independent interest, without a regard to general policy. The grand assembly is now rarely summoned, nor have the Sicques, since the Afghan war, been embarked in any united cause.

Their military force may be said to consist essentially of cavalry; for, though some artillery is maintained, it is awkwardly managed, and its uses ill understood; and their infantry, held in low estimation, usually garrison the forts, and are employed in the meaner duties of the service.

A Sicque horseman is armed with a matchlock and sabre of excellent metal, and his horse is strong and well formed. In this matter I speak from a personal knowledge, having in the course of my journey seen two of their parties, each of which amounted to about two hundred horsemen. They were clothed in white vests *, and their arms were preserved in good order: the accoutrements, consisting of priming-horns and ammunition-pouches, were chiefly covered with European scarlet cloth, and ornamented with gold lace. The predilection of the Sicques for the match-lock musquet, and the constant use they make of it, causes a difference in their manner of attack from that of any other Indian cavalry; a party, from forty to fifty, advance in a quick pace to the distance of a carabine shot from the enemy, and then, that the fire may be given with the greater certainty, the horses are drawn up, and their pieces discharged; when, speedily retiring about a hundred paces, they load, and repeat the same mode of annoying the enemy. The horses have been so expertly trained to the performance of this operation, that, on receiving a stroke of the hand, they stop from a full career. But it is not by this mode of combat that the Sicques have become

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* A long calico gown, having a close body and sleeves, with a white skirt.

a formidable people. Their successes and conquests have largely originated from an activity unparalleled by other Indian nations, from their endurance of excessive fatigue, and a keen resentment of injuries. The personal endowments of the Sicques are derived from a temperance of diet, and a forbearance from many of those sensual pleasures which have enervated the Indian Mahometans. A body of their cavalry has been known to make marches of forty or fifty miles, and to continue the exertion for many successive days.

THE forces of this nation must be numerous, though I am not possessed of any substantial document for ascertaining the amount. A Sicque will confidently say, that his country can furnish three hundred thousand cavalry, and, to authenticate the assertion, affirms that every person, holding even a small property, is provided with a horse, match-lock, and side-arms. But in qualification of this account, if we admit that the Sicques when united can bring two hundred thousand horse into the field, their force in cavalry is greater than that of any other state in Hindostan. A passage which I extracted from a memoir*, written at Delhi in 1777, exhibits a lively picture of this people in their military capacity. "The Sicques," it repre-

* I believe it was written by Colonel Polier.

sents, " are in general strong and well made; " accustomed from their infancy to the most " laborious life, and hardest fare, they make " marches, and undergo fatigues that really ap" pear astonishing. In their excursions they carry " no tents or baggage, except, perhaps, a small " tent for the principal officer: the rest shelter " themselves under blankets, which serve them " also in the cold weather to wrap themselves " in, and which, on a march, cover their saddles. " They have commonly two, some of them " three, horses each, of the middle size, strong, " active, and mild tempered. The provinces " of Lahore and Moultan, noted for a breed of " the best horses in Hindostan, afford them an " ample supply; and indeed they take the " greatest care to increase it by all means in " their power. Though they make merry on " the demise of any of their brethren, they " mourn for the death of a horse: thus shewing " their love of an animal so necessary to them " in their professional capacity. The food of " the Sicques is of the coarsest kind, and such " as the poorest people in Hindostan use from " necessity. Bread, baked in ashes, and soaked " in a mash made of different sorts of pulse, " is the best dish, and such as they never in" dulge in but when at full leisure; otherwise, " vetches and tares, hastily parched, is all they

" care for. They abhor smoaking tobacco, for " what reason I cannot discover; but intoxi- " cate themselves freely with spirits of their " own country manufacture. A cup of the " last they never fail taking after a fatigue at " night. Their dress is extremely scanty: a " pair of long blue drawers, and a kind of " checkered plaid, a part of which is fastened " round the waist, and the other thrown over " the shoulder, with a mean turban, form their " clothing and equipage. The chiefs are dis- " tinguished by wearing some heavy gold " bracelets on their wrists, and sometimes a " chain of the same metal bound round their " turbans, and by being mounted on better " horses: otherwise, no distinction appears " amongst them. The chiefs are numerous, " some of whom have the command of ten or " twelve thousand cavalry; but this power is " confined to a small number, the inferior " officers maintaining from one to two thou- " sand, and many not more than twenty or " thirty horses; a certain quota of which is " furnished by the chief, the greater part being " the individual property of the horsemen."

From the spirit of independence so invariably infused amongst them, their mutual jealousy, and rapacious roving temper, the Sicques at this day are seldom seen co-operating in national concert, but, actuated by the influence of an individual ambition, or private distrust, they pursue such plans only as coincide with these motives. An example of their forces being engaged in opposite interests, has been noticed in the case of Mhah Sing, who succoured the Rajah of Jumbo, against the Sicque party, which had invaded his country. Before the chiefs of the Mountaineers country, at the head of the Punjab, were reduced to a tributary state, severe depredations were committed on them by the Sicques, who plundered and destroyed their habitations, carried off the cattle, and, if strong and well formed, the male children, who were made converts to the faith of Nanock. But since the payment of a fixed tribute has been stipulated, which does not amount to more than five per cent. on the revenue, the Mountaineers are little molested, except when the Sicques have been called in to adjust their domestic quarrels.

The extensive and fertile territory of the Sicques, and their attachment and application in the midst of warfare to the occupations of agriculture, must evidently produce a large revenue. The districts dependent on Lahore in the reign of Aurungzebe, produced, according to Mr. Bernier, a revenue of two hundred and forty-six lacks and ninety-five thousand rupees*; and we are naturally led to suppose, from the industrious skill of the Sicques in the various branches of cultivation, that no great decrease of that amount can have taken place since the Punjab has fallen into their possession.

An extensive and valuable commerce is also maintained in their country, which has been extended to distant quarters of India; particularly to the provinces of Bengal and Bahar, where many Sicque merchants of opulence at this time reside. The Omichund who took so active, though unfortunate, a share in the revolution, which the English effected in Bengal, was a Sicque; as is his adopted son, who is now an inhabitant of Calcutta. Merchants of every nation or sect, who may introduce a traffick into their territories, or are established under their government, experience a full protection, and enjoy commercial privileges in common with their own subjects. At the same time it must be noticed, that such immunities are granted only to those who remain amongst them, or import wares for the immediate supply of the Sicque markets. But the foreign traders, or even travellers, who attempt

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Two millions four hundred and sixty-nine thousand five hundred pounds sterling, at two shillings for the rupee.

to pass through the Punjab, are often plundered, and usually ill-treated. In the event of no molestation being offered to people of this description, the escape is ever spoken of with a degree of joyful surprise, and a thanksgiving is offered to Providence for the singular escape. This conduct, inimical to the progress of civilization, and an impediment to the influx of wealth, proceeds from an extreme jealousy of strangers, added to a rapacity of temper, which make them averse to the encouragement of any scheme in whose success they do not immediately participate.

The Sicques are not rigorous in their stipulations with the Mahometan proselytes, who, if they abstain from beef's flesh (which is held in equal abhorrence by the Sicques as by the Hindoos), and perform the more ostensible duties, as burning their dead, and preserving the hair of the head, an indulgent latitude is granted in all the other articles of the creed of Nanock. The Mahometans who reside in the Punjab, are subject to occasional oppression, and often to the insult of the lower classes of the people; among whom it is not an uncommon practice to defile the places of worship, by throwing in the carcases of hogs and other things held impure by the Musselman law. The Mahometans are also prohibited from announcing their stated times of prayer, which, conformably to their usage, is proclaimed in a loud tone of voice. A Sicque who in the chase shall have slain a wild hog, is frequently known to compel the first Mahometan he meets to carry to his home the body of the animal; and, on being initiated into the rites of their religion, the Sicques will sometimes require a Mahometan convert to bind on his arm the tusk of a boar, that, by this act of national impurity, he may the more avowedly testify a renunciation and contempt of the tenets of his former faith. These facts will sufficiently mark the haughty and insulting demeanour, which, with few deviations, forms a prominent feature in the character of the military Sicques; but we may also ascribe a certain portion of their severe and contumelious treatment of the Mahometans, to a remembrance of recent injuries.

The discordant interests which agitate the Sicque nation, and the constitutional genius of the people, must incapacitate them, during the existence of these causes, from becoming a formidable offensive power; nor are they invested with that species of executive strength which is necessary to advance and establish a distant conquest. In the defence and recovery of their country, the Sicques displayed a courage of the most obstinate kind, and manifested a perseverance, under the pressure of calamities, which bear an ample testimony of native resource, when the common danger had roused them to action, and gave but one impulse to their spirit. Should any future cause call forth the combined efforts of the Sicques to maintain the existence of empire and religion, we may see some ambitious chief led on by his genius and success, and, absorbing the power of his associates, display, from the ruins of their commonwealth, the standard of monarchy. The page of history is filled with the like effects, springing from the like causes. Under such a form of government, I have little hesitation in saying, that the Sicques would be soon advanced to the first rank amongst the native princes of Hindostan; and would become a terror to the surrounding states*.

I am,
Dear Sir,
Yours, &c.

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* Mhadgee Scindia, a Marhatta chief, by seizing the relics of the Imperial authority and domain, has placed himself in the situation which the Sicques must have been desirous of occupying. This resolution will naturally create a national enmity, perhaps a contest, between the northern branch of the Marhatta empire, and the Sicques.

LETTER XII.

Kashmire, April, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

ON the 17th of April, I left Jumbo; and, accompanied by a Kashmirian servant, who carried my baggage, I reached the small village of Dunshaulah, after a painful journey on foot, of ten cosses. A review of my feet, too plainly shewed that they had not been proof against the steep and rocky roads I had clambered over; indeed they had suffered so severely by bruises and excoriations, that I could scarcely walk.

HAVING bound up my feet with bandages soaked in oil, I reached, on the 18th, though with difficulty, the village of Nagrolah—five cosses. During these two last days, I paid, at the different custom-houses, certain small fees of office, which were not authorized charges; but being known to be a stranger, and apparently in a condition to satisfy the demand, I was seldom permitted to pass a custom-house unmolested.

Though the lacerations in my feet gave me much pain, especially at the first setting off, I pursued my journey in good spirits, being protected by the quiet disposition of the people, and sure of procuring a good meal in the evenings, with commodious lodging. The first night, we were received into a retail shop, at Dunshaulah, where I slept on my large blanket, and supped on some spiced meat and biscuits, which my Jumbo host had provided: and at Nagrolah we were accommodated by a Mahometan family, who supplied me with a standing bed.

On the 19th, at Luttere—eight cosses. The latter part of the journey led me up a high and steep hill, and the sun, then at its meridian height, had nearly overpowered me; when, on a sudden, I found myself on a summit, where some charitable Hindoo had erected a small, but a cool, building*, plentifully supplied with pots of water. Under this hospitable shade, I was permitted, though a Mahometan, to rest during the day, and to sleep at night. Many Hindoos came in for the benefit of the water and shade, and observing that I was lame, they treated me with an attentive kindness, and dispensed with my rising when any of their principal people entered.

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* Called, in the language of the country, *Durmsallen*, which signifies "A charitable foundation."

In the number of those who came to partake of the charitable uses of this house, was a Mahometan, who, ejaculating his *Bismillah* *, laid himself down, without farther ceremony, in the interior quarter of the apartment. A Hindoo of rank, accompanied by several attendants, entered soon after, and observing that the mendicant had occupied the most convenient as well as honorary place, and that he offered no mark of attention or respect, the Hindoo ordered that his chattels, which were heavy, should be thrown into the road. On exclaiming against this act of ejection, he was told, that though the house was erected for the purpose of common accommodation, with no view of excluding any nation or sect; yet in some cases, as in the present, an observance of precedency and deference was necessary. This anecdote will serve to generally delineate the native difference betwixt the temper of a Hindoo and a Mahometan. What do you think would have been the reception of a Hindoo, particularly of a religious order, had he come into a karavanserah, in a Mahometan country, and thrown his brass pot, his rice, or peas, into an apartment which Mahometans had previously occupied? Could the Hindoo have acted with such indiscretion—his punishment would have been more disgraceful and severe than death. From long observation, I can with confidence say, that the Hindoos are a more temperate people, and much more useful in the various relations of life, than any class of Mahometans that have come within my knowledge.

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* An Arabick compound word, signifying "In the name of God."

At the vicinity of Nagrolah commence the districts of the Chinnanee chief, a dependent on Jumbo, who possesses a revenue of about a lack of rupees. This chief does not remit any tribute to his superior, but assists his government with a quota of troops in the event of exigency; and conformably to this tenure he now serves in the campaign against the Sicques.

On the 20th, at Chinnanee; a neat and populous town, situate on the brow of a hill; at the foot of which, on the eastern side, runs a rapid stream, passing to the left. This channel is passed by means of two stout fir beams, one of which reaches from the shore to an insulated rock in the centre of the current, on which it is fastened by wooden stakes; and the other extends from the rock to the opposite bank. The velocity with which the water was precipitated, its roaring noise, and the narrow shaking bridge, gave full occasion for the use of my eye, and the steadiness of my head. At Chinnance, I was taxed in the sum of a rupee for permission to cross the river Chinnaun, which forms the western limit of this chiefship.

On the 21st, at Dumomunjee—seven cosses. A few scattered houses, in one of which I was accommodated by a Kashmirian family, who had taken a farm in that quarter. The approach to this village leads through a valley, covered with luxuriant herbage, and interspersed with some of the most beautiful shrubs I ever saw. From Jumbo hither, the road tended, as nearly as I could ascertain, to the east and east-by-south; but from the vicinity of Dumomunjee it leads to the north and north-by-west*.

On the 22d, at Nausman—nine cosses: a small village in the Kishtewer country; the only independent Hindoo territory I have yet seen in India. This day, crossed the Chinnaun, usually denominated at this place, from the mode of crossing it, the Chickah. The manner of conveying passengers and all sorts of property over this stream is curious, and deserves explanation. The Chinnaun is about seventy or eighty yards broad, and, like the rivers of this part of India, from the declivity of the country, very rapid. On the opposite banks are fixed strong wooden posts, of about four feet in height, on the upper ends of which a stout rope is tightly extended, and is joined below to a smaller one, by hoops of twisted osiers.—In the centre of the small rope, to which only the hoops are firmly attached, hangs a vehicle of net-work, for the conveyance of merchandise and passengers, which is supported from the main rope by a wooden slider, in the form and size of a bullock's yoke, to whose ends the vehicle is fastened; and a sufficient length of both ends of the small rope permits it to be landed on either side of the river. It appears that the seat, or, as it is termed in this country, the Chickah, is by mutual agreement kept on the Kishtewer side, during the night. In defiance of my passport, the officer at the Chinnanee limit, taxed me in an additional fee; and I was also compelled to buy my way through an inferior tribe of harpies, who infested the water-side. Anxious to arrive at the end of the stage, being both hungry and tired, I endeavoured to pacify their clamours; but other demands were yet against me: for this extraordinary race of ferrymen, having conveyed my servant and our little baggage over half of the river, kept them swinging there, and declared that they should be detained until a second payment was made. Though this impediment materially affected me, I could not resist laughing at the awkward position of the unfortunate domestic, who bawled out to me, from his slack rope, that they were a pack of hardened rogues, and that he would rather be kept hanging all night, than consent to give them a farthing more. But the necessities of my situation cooled my resentment, and obliged me to purchase his release.

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* My servant informed me that robberies are often committed in these parts, by the inhabitants of an adjacent district; and to avoid which, travellers have been induced to make a deviation from the more direct track. But I apprehend that the abrupt steepness of some of the ranges of mountains in this quarter, has caused this oblique direction.

At Nausman, I waited on a Mahometan of some distinction, who was travelling into Kashmire, and I requested permission to travel in his suite, that I might with more success, I informed him, repel the dreaded attack of the custom-house officers; who, since my departure from Jumbo, had extorted a larger sum than was proportioned to the state of my finances. At the distance of every ten or twelve miles from Jumbo to the Chinnaun river, one of these petty tyrants takes his stand; and on the payment of a stipulated sum to the government, collects the public duties, as well as enforces every species of private exaction; and such taxes have become the more grievous to the merchant, by their being equally levied on the transportation of goods through a district, as at the actual place of sale. From Kashmire to Lucknow are not less than thirty stations at which a duty of three and four per cent. is levied on every quality of merchandize: this charge, with the expences necessarily incurred in the course of a tedious and distant land-conveyance, largely enhances the price of shawls in the lower part of India. Zulphucar Khan, the person whom I had addressed, readily offered me assistance, and admitted me, without reserve, into his party. This Khan had lately served the chief of Jumbo, and had been employed in the management of a district which that chief holds in Kashmire. But on the charge of some default, the Mahometan was recalled; and, after undergoing a rigorous confinement, as well as severe tortures, the effect of which had destroyed his right hand, he was permitted to retire into Kashmire, where his family now resides.

On the 23d, we proceeded six cosses, and halted on the summit of a steep and uninhabited mountain: the air, in itself bleak, was made painfully cold by the fall of a heavy rain, which did not cease during the night. It were almost superfluous to say, that the person who makes this journey, should possess a strong and vigorous constitution, and he should also endeavour to cordially wean himself from the desire of every luxury.

On the 24th, at Hullweiggin, a village composed of detached hamlets—five cosses. The journey of this day consisted wholly of clambering over hills, and I may add, rolling down them. The protection of the Khan was conspicuously manifested at this custom-house, where I only paid one quarter of a rupee; and being now considered an established member of his family, I was treated at our places of halt with much civility. All the custom-houses on the north side of the Chinnaun, are in the hands of Kashmirians, who have found in the Hindoo districts a safe and profitable retreat from the oppressions of their own government. The inhabitants of Kishtewer are Hindoos, though the chief is a Mahometan; but we may suppose no very rigid one, for either he, or his father, became a convert, to effect some purpose with the governor of Kashmire.

On the 25th, at Bannaul—seven cosses. A small village, dependent on Kashmire; where we were accommodated in a mosque *, the common lodging of Mahometan travellers, in places not supplied with karavanserahs. Much hail and rain having fallen this day, the path, a winding and narrow one, became so slippery, that our progress was very slow; and my shoes, which were purchased at Jumbo, now evinced so many wide marks of dissolution, that I was

* It was small, and built of wood.

obliged to tie them to my feet with cords. At the distance of three cosses to the south-east of the village of Bannaul, we passed the boundary of a division of the Kashmire territory, lying without the greater circle of mountains. The governors of Kashmire permit the fertile valley of Bannaul, of ten or twelve miles in length, to remain uncultivated, that it may not afford shelter or provision to the bordering Hindoo states; who, in former periods, have, through this tract, approached the interior passes of Kashmire.

On the 26th, at the town of Dufroo, or Surroo, a station—seven cosses. The first part of this road leads over a mountain, whose ascent is computed, in a winding direction, at six miles. On the summit, then covered with snow, except where a stream of water intervenes, are seen the plains of Kashmire, extending, in a long range, from the south-east to the north-west, and exhibiting a beautiful diversity of landscape. The view, long a rare one to me, was highly grateful, and excited a train of pleasing ideas, which the successful progress of my journey contributed to heighten, and which I continued to indulge, until the extreme chillness of the air compelled me to descend into a warmer climate.

Having now brought you to a near view of this land of pleasure, I am urged, that the description may be more explanatory, to call back your attention to the country and people I have lately visited.—From Lall Dong to the Ganges, the face of the country forms a close chain of woody mountains, and, did not one or two miserable hamlets feebly interpose, you would pronounce that division of Siringnaghur fitted only for the habitation of the beasts of the forest. Elephants abound there, in numerous herds; but are not to be seen, it is said, on the west side of the Jumna. In the vicinity of Nhan, the country is interspersed with low hills, and frequently opens into extensive valleys; which having, perhaps, ever lain waste, are overgrown with low wood. From thence to Ballaspour, the scene is changed into piles of lofty mountains, whose narrow breaks barely serve to discharge the descending streams. From Bellaspour, fertile valleys, though not wide, extend to Bissouly, where the country is again covered with high hills, which, with little variation, stretch to the limits of Kashmire. The boundaries of Kishtewer, except to the place of my entrance and departure, are not specified; nor is the amount of the revenues; an omission caused by my inability to procure any substantial authority. The road from Lall Dong to Kashmire, as accurately as could be ascertained, from an observation of the sun's course, tended generally to the north-west, west-north-west, and west-by-north; except where the deviation is otherwise noted. The sides of the inhabited mountains produce wheat, barley, and a variety of the small grains peculiar to India. The cultivated spaces project from the body of the hill, in separate flats, in the form of a range of semicircular stairs; with a broad base and a narrow summit. The ground, which is strong and productive, has been propelled, it should seem, into these projections by the action of the rains, which fall among these mountains with great violence, from June till October; and is now preserved, in this divided and level state, by buttresses of loose stones, which bind in the edge of every flat. Rice is also cultivated in the narrow valleys, but not in a great quantity; nor is it the usual food of the inhabitants, who chiefly subsist on wheat, bread, and pease made into a thick soup. From Nhan, the northern sides of the hills produce the fir*, in great plenty; and in the country between Jumbo and Kashmire, are seen many pines; but I observed they only grew on the north face of the mountains. I have frequently eat my meal under the shade of a spreading willow, which here, as in Europe, delights in hanging over a stream. The climate is not favourable to fruits and vegetables, being too hot-for the Persian products, and not sufficiently warm to mature those of India: though the white mulberry must be excepted, which, at Jumbo, is of a large size, and of an exquisite flavour. The villages of the Mountaineers, or rather their hamlets, stand generally on the brow of a hill, and consist of from four to six or eight small scattered houses; which are built of rough stones, laid in a clay loam, and usually flat-roofed: I have also seen, though not often, sloping roofs of wood. The resinous parts of the fir, cut in slips, supply the common uses of the lamp, in all the places where that tree abounds; but the method of extracting its turpentine, or tar, does not seem to be known. The natives of these mountains are composed of the different classes of Hindoos, and little other difference of manners exists between them and those of the southern quarters of India than is seen amongst a people who occupy the high and low lands of the same country. The scarcity of wealth, by depressing the growth of luxury, has given them a rude simplicity of character, and has impeded the general advancement of civilization. They have no spacious buildings for private or public use, nor in the performance of religious offices do they observe those minuter or refined ceremonies that are practised by the southern Hindoos.

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* That species of it called the Scots fir.

At Taullah Mhokee* a small volcanic fire issues from the side of a mountain, on which the Hindoos have raised a temple that has long been of celebrity and favourite resort among the people of the Punjab. Fire being the purest of the elements, the Hindoos consider it, as did most of the ancient Asiatic nations, the fittest emblem to represent the Deity. All places which produce a subterraneous flame are held sacred by the Hindoos, who do not permit any image to be placed near it; believing that other symbols would tend to sully the purity of this representation; and I have often noticed, that those Hindoos who are most conversant in the rites of their religion, never omitted, at the first sight of fire in the course of the day, to offer up a prayer of adoration. The Mountaineers invariably reserved the beard, and, instead of bowing the head in salutation, as in Lower India, they embrace the party addressed, and incline the head over his left shoulder. The growth of the beard is encouraged, perhaps, from a certain ferocity of disposition incident to their situation, and generally predominant in the disposition of Mountaineers, which prompts them, in different modes, to shew a disdain and contempt for the softer manners of the natives of the low country *.

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* This word signifies "The mouth of the flame." The place is situate eight or nine miles to the northward of Nadone, the principal town in the Kangrah country.

The women have the olive complexion, are delicately shaped, and evince a freedom in their manner, which, without a tendency to immodesty, or connected with the habits of licentiousness, seems the result of the common confidence reposed in them by the men: I have seen a woman stop, though carrying a pot of water, and converse unreservedly with passengers; giving them an information of the road, or any other ordinary intelligence. Their dress consists of a petticoat, with a border, usually of different colours; a close jacket, covering half of the waist; and a loose stomacher to the fore part of it, which reaches to the girdle. Their hair, which they hold in as high an estimation as that beautiful appendage can be regarded by the gayest females of Europe, is plaited with black silk, or cotton strings, and falls down the back; over

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* A swelling of the exterior part of the throat, which is ascribed to the noxious quality of the water, prevails among the mountaineers. As the same complaint, proceeding probably, from the like cause, is incident to certain inhabitants of the Alps and other mountainous countries in Europe, the origin of it has, doubtless, been scientifically investigated and explained: I will, therefore, only observe, that the water issuing from these mountains is impregnated, from the large mixture of snow, with a crude and cold quality, and may have acquired its alleged pernicious property from being confined in channels, which the shade of the woods and the height of the hills preclude from a free circulation of air and the rays of the sun.

which they throw, in a graceful fashion, a veil which seldom touches, and never wholly conceals, the face. The women of the principal people, in the manner of the Mahometans, are kept in private apartments: this practice, existing in a country * where little danger is apprehended from foreign intrusion, affords a belief, that the concealment of the higher ranks of women has been an established custom of the Hindoos, previously to the date of the Mahometan conquest of India. It was once my opinion, that the Hindoos had secluded them from the public view that they might not be exposed to the intemperance of the Mahometan conquerors; but after perceiving the usage adopted amongst the sequestered Mountaineers, and also amongst the various independent Marhatta states, I am induced to think that the exclusion of women from society, prevailed in India before the period of the Afghan or Tartar invasions. At the same time, were a conclusion to be drawn from certain customs of the Hindoos, now obsolete, but noticed in their history, I would say, that they did not, in more ancient times, confine any class of their women; but, as their manners, from the influx of wealth, and consequent luxury, became less simple, that the princes

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* Mountainous and difficult of access to a hostile nation.

and nobles of the country produced the innovation from a desire of impressing the populace with a greater respect for their families. The story of the incarnations of Vystnow, and other ancient legends, shews that the Hindoo women were admitted into the assembly of men, and often possessed an extensive sway. In the history of their celebrated Ram, who appears to have been a powerful soldier, is seen a passage which serves to illustrate this position, and to trace also, to a high source, a mode of trial formerly established in Europe.

IT is necessary to inform you, that Sree Mun Narrain, the Supreme Deity of the Hindoos, together with his indivisible associates, Mhah Letchimy, and the Snake, for the purpose of correcting certain evils which had at that time deranged our terrestrial world, found it expedient to personify human creatures: Narrain assumed the form of Ram, a renowned soldier; Letchimy became his wife, under the name of Seetah Devee; and the Snake was transformed into the body of Letchimun, the brother and companion of Ram. It is seen that these personages mixed freely in the societies of the world, nor does any part of the history notice the retirement of Seetah: she is, indeed, represented coming forth on every occasion which could, with propriety, permit the interference of her sex. A service of importance calling upon Ram's individual exertion, he consigned Seetah to the charge of Letchimun: the lady and her guardian remained some time in security and quiet; when a famed magician, instigated no doubt by the devil, who is ever on the watch to draw astray mortals, particularly the female division of them, came that way, saw Seetah, and became violently enamoured. This subtle man, having discovered, it is supposed by his spells and incantations, that the eyes of women are the soonest ensnared, let fly, full in the sight of Seetah, a bird of brilliant and beautiful plumage. This artifice had the most powerful effect; for the deluded fair-one instantly conjured Letchimun, by every pledge he held dear, by the affection he bore to her, by his friendship for Ram, to procure for her the charming bird. Letchimun, amazed and much troubled at this entreaty, endeavoured to describe the imminent danger of quitting her in so perilous a situation, his dread of Ram's displeasure for the desertion of so grand a trust: in short, he urged every argument which a regard for his own character or her safety could suggest. The dazzling hues of the bird had so amply filled the mind of Seetah, that no space remained for the counsel of Letchimun; she must possess this charming object of her wishes, or become the most miserable of women. On the repeated denial of Letchimun to gratify so dangerous a request, blinded by the disappointment of her hopes, and impelled by a paroxysm of rage, she accused him of the design of seduction, which she alleged to be the reason of his refusal to leave her. Letchimun, now convinced of the inefficacy of argument, and the necessity of acquiescence, went in quest of the bird; but previously to his departure he drew a magic circle around the spot where Seetah stood, and told her, that within that space no calamity could enter. Letchimun had no sooner gone, than the plotting necromancer, assuming the appearance of an old man, approached, with a feeble and decrepit step, the place where Seetah stood, and, through an apparent excess of weakness, extended himself on the ground. He besought her, in a piteous tone of voice, for a little water to allay his thirst, and restore his exhausted strength. The humane, but ill-fated, Seetah, felt the force of the old man's prayer, and, with a bosom overflowing with benevolence, she stepped, unmindful of her safety, beyond the prescribed bounds, and fell that instant into the power of her betrayer. Here the story wanders into a wilder field of fable; where I should reap little credit, or you improvement. I will, therefore, content myself with mentioning, that after Ram had recovered Seetah, he ordered, for the removal of certain suspicions which had crept into his own breast, and for effectually shutting the mouth of slander, which began to open, that she should be judged by the ordeal trial. Seetah, eager to banish every doubt from the mind of her lord, and to exhibit to the world a public test of her purity, joyfully heard the mandate; and, without show of dread, walked over the burning iron. But the feet of Seetah, says the story, "being shod with in- "nocence, the scorching heat was to her a bed "of flowers."

PARDON me for the intrusion of this Eastern tale, which might justly be deemed a trifling one, did it not indicate that the women of rank, among the more ancient Hindoos, were not excluded from the public eye, and that this people were acquainted with the trial by fire at an early period of time. The same uses may be derived from this story as are contained in the Arabian Nights; where, amidst the olio of talisman, genii, and devils, we are enabled to extract just relations of the manners and dispositions of the people.

As I have thus far entered on a subject which has occasionally engaged my attention, I will proceed a little farther, and recite a circumstance which may corroborate the position, that ndoo women of distinction, by ancient as well as existing usage, were not debarred the sight of men. When a female of the chittery, or royal race, was marriageable, or supposed to possess a discriminating choice, she was conduced to an apartment where many youths of her own tribe were assembled; and, being desired to select from them her future husband, she distinguished the object of her partiality by throwing over his neck a wreath of flowers*.

THESE desultory opinions are freely given, and I am to intreat you will as freely review them; receiving such as may stand on principles of reason, and rejecting, without a scruple, those that seem vague or fanciful.

I am,
Dear Sir,
Yours, &c.

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* This custom, I am informed, has been observed within these late years at Tanjore.

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